

'Sexy'
not
always
'healthy'
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Young again
before orchestra
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after the quake
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Earth cries 'water'

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Xiliu Lake in the suburbs of Zhengzhou, Henan Province, has dried up in a drought called the worst since 1951. Seven key agricultural provinces in North China, 43 percent of the country's winter wheat suppliers, have seen their crops decimated. Beijing has gone a hundred days with less than 0.1 millimeters of precipitation, its longest recorded drought since 1971.

CFP Photo

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crumbles during
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Can the city
create a
creative industry?



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British MP wins
engagement
approval over tea

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Wokai NGO
brings the business
of giving



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Unemployed migrant workers have been squeezed back out of the job market.

IC Photo

20 million migrant workers return home jobless

By Han Manman

About 20 million migrant workers returned home jobless this Spring Festival, their employment evaporated by the financial crisis, a senior official said Monday in Beijing.

Chen Xiwen, director of the office of the central leading group on rural work, said 15 percent of the 130 million migrant workers were affected.

The figures were based on a survey conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture in 150 villages in 15 provinces last month.

His remarks came a day after the central government issued its first document this year, which warned 2009 would be "the toughest year" since the turn of the century in terms of securing eco-

nomie development and maintaining development in rural areas.

The country's economic growth slowed to 6.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008, dragging down the annual rate to a seven-year low of 9 percent.

Many factories in export-driven southern China have closed, raising concern that social stability in rural areas will face new pressure as unemployed migrant workers lack the income to support their families, Chen said.

"There's a considerable number of rural migrants who are unemployed. After they return to their villages, how will they earn money? How will they live? That's troubling for social stability this year," he said.

Lessons should be learned from past mass incidents in rural areas, and the voices of the people should be heard, he said.

"It is fair to say that the Chinese government takes seriously the issue of employment of migrant workers," he said, adding, "Guaranteeing employment and livelihood is a way to guarantee social stability."

The document urged local government departments to adopt measures to create jobs and increase rural income.

Companies were asked to take on more social responsibilities and give rural migrant workers more favorable employment treatment. Flexible employment policies and more training chances were also encouraged.

The situation of jobless migrant workers was the main emphasis of the government's first document issued this year. It was the sixth of its kind to address rural problems since 2004.

The document also emphasizes the need to stabilize the prices of agricultural products and increase farmers' income, and to extend a rural subsidy scheme for home appliance purchases nationwide to boost rural consumption. The countryside remains the most untapped pool of domestic demand.

China should "place priority on tapping the rural market and developing the countryside" to alleviate the effects of the global financial crisis, Vice Premier Wang Qishan said last month.

City sees drought of 100 days



Children play in a dried riverbed, the latest victim at a drought in Tangyin county, Henan Province.

IC Photo

By Jin Zhu

Since October 26, 2008, Beijing has gone a hundred days with less than 0.1 millimeters of precipitation. It was the longest period without precipitation since 1971. February is typically a time of very dry weather, so the drought is not expected to end any time soon.

According to the latest monitoring results from China Meteorological Administration, the current drought has hit hardest the winter wheat growers on Beijing's edge.

"In some areas, the earth has dried and cracked due to the extreme shortage. Wheat sprouts have withered. Such a severe drought hasn't been seen in years," Tang Yanli, an investigator from the Information Center of the Ministry of Agriculture, said.

Dry weather has also caused an increasing number of people to suffer from respiratory ailments. According to statistics from Sino-Japan Friendship Hospital, the majority of patients

each day came in suffering from the common cold, indigestion or the flu.

"As the weather turns warmer and the dryness continues, many people will be vulnerable to the flu and tracheitis. People who are ill should avoid going out in public and spreading their germs to others," Jia Yuping, associate chief physician in Department of Respiratory Medicine, said.

Director-general of the China Meteorological Administration

Zheng Guoguang said Wednesday that many places in the north have experienced drought. In Hebei, Shangxi, Shandong, Henan and Anhui provinces precipitation during the past three months was down 50 to 60 percent.

"Since the possibility of having lasting precipitation is very small, the drought will not end any time soon. Artificial precipitation might be useful this month when streams of cold air begin to pass by," Zheng said.

Massive drop in college-bound rural students

By Han Manman

Statistics show the percentage of rural students in Chinese university classrooms has fallen from 30 percent during the 1980s to a current 17.7 percent. This is despite an increase in their overall number, *Guangzhou Daily* reported last week.

"Rural students made up 80 percent of my class when I was in university. But it's totally different now. I often wonder about the reason," the paper quoted Premier Wen Jiabao as saying during a speech last month.

Yang Mingwei, a teacher from Guangzhou, said despite the government extending university enrollments in recent years and an increase in rural area income, the number of rural students has dropped off.

"Only 25 percent of my students prepare to enter the university, but 18 years ago as many as 60 percent tried," Yang said. He said many rural families care less and less about their children's education.

Experts said there are many reasons behind the phenomena.

The unbalanced distribution of educational resources is one reason, Zhang Mingqiang, a professor from South China Normal University who studied university education for years, said.

"There has long been a difference in investment in education between urban and rural areas in China. A lack of qualified teachers and adequate facilities, plus a trend toward building 'elite schools' are reasons why we are seeing fewer rural students," Zhang said.

Zhang said finding a job after graduation is getting harder, which is discouraging more high school graduates. Families in rural areas may be reluctant to invest in something from which they cannot gain.

He said expensive tuition and the high unemployment rates may make rural parents believe education is useless, and suggested the government should provide further subsidies and support to schools in rural areas.

However, some netizens pointed out that the drop may be because more rural students have realized there are ways to seek development outside the university.

"Compared to the past, rural area students like me have more options, such as going to vocational schools, technical schools, going into private business or working in other cities," Li Qihua, who graduated from a vocational school last year in Hebei Province, said.

Li said he heard a lot about how it was to find a job after graduation. He discussed his concerns with his parents and decided to enter a vocational school. "Though I may earn less money than a college graduate could, I am always guaranteed a job because I learned a real skill," he said.

Citizen team on watch to catch late sleeping officials

By Zhang Dongya

Last Sunday, the first day of work after Spring Festival, a group of people in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, went to the city's government offices to videotape officials who showed up late for work. They said they wanted to supervise and ensure the city sees a return to business as usual after the holiday.

The 91-strong group was from a civil association called "Citizen Watch Team," organized in 2005.

The entire membership was dispatched in six teams to watch out for latecomers at different offices. After 8:30 am, when the work day officially began, they set up video cameras to catch those

who were late.

The head of the team Wang Linlai said it was not the first time they monitored who those took an extended holiday break. Some officials knew they were filming and took the initiative to explain their reasons for being late.

"Some who came late were frank about it and promised to work on time. We want to use civilian resources to monitor small things like ensuring our officials show up for work on time," Wang said.

The average age of team members was 52. Members included professors, teachers and other officials. Half were in active service, and half already retired. They are selected

and rotated every two years.

The team was nicknamed "city woodpecker" since it likes to pick at civil phenomenon in the city. Wang said the team follows a three-strike process for correcting misbehaving officials: first, the person in question is informed, then his superior and then the media.

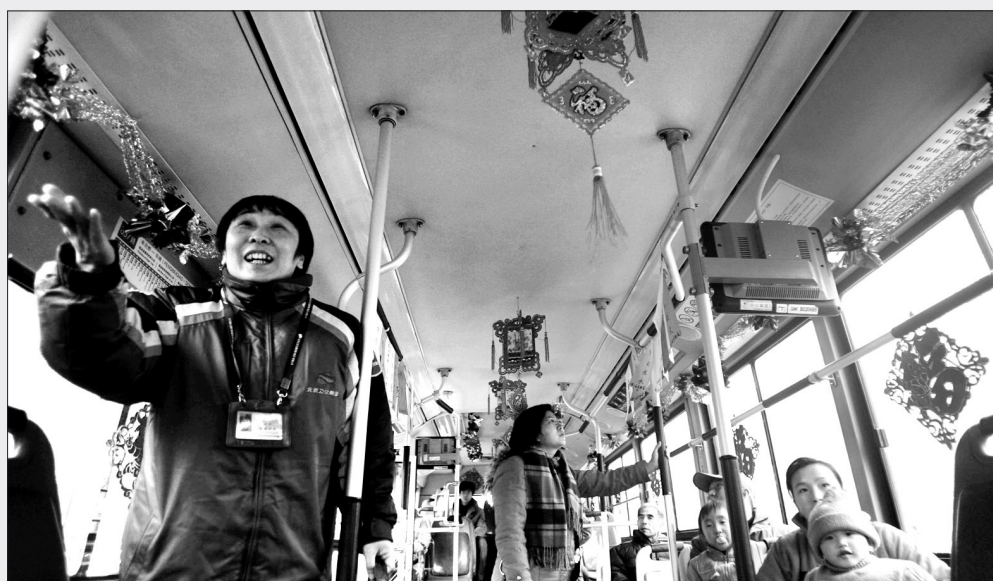
Though relatively new, the team has been widely recognized by the public and local government. "There were times we were misunderstood, but now most people understand what we are doing and support us. The most important thing is we built a bridge between the public and the government," Wang said.



Two members of Citizen Watch Team video taping late arriving officials in front of a government building.

Photo provided by Yangzhou Daily

Bus drivers ask criddle



The ticketer on Bus 675 created her own decorations and riddles on February 4, Chinese lunar festival lichun on her bus. Passengers are rewarded with small gifts for to liven up the correct answers.

CFP Photo

Oldest defendant stands trial

By Jin Zhu

The eldest suspect in the city's judicial history has become the defendant in what prosecutors say is a fraud case involving as much as 794,000 yuan. Opening statements were heard in Beijing Chaoyang People's Court on Tuesday.

Zhou Zhiping, 98, passed himself off as Li Liejun, a founding member of the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang, and wove a lie about how he was thawing large funds left by former high-ranking officials.

According to the evidence provided by the procuratorate, Zhou claimed that when the Kuomintang fled the mainland after the civil war, many senior officials bought large sums of United States debt which had been frozen since. However, anyone who could provide the Bank of China with 13 complete sets of US dollars printed in 1996 with sequential numbers could recover the money.

Zhou took over a company in 2003 where he met Chen, a 75-year-old US national. From April in 2007 to June in 2008, Chen kept buying US dollars in Beijing and Sichuan Province after he was taken in by the scam.

During the court hearing, Zhou denied acting as the ringleader. "I was only in charge of signing my name on relevant documents. When the customers came to the company and asked whether I was a founding member of the Kuomintang, I was just supposed to nod," he said.

Police said another two suspects involved, Xiao Wanni and Wang Shenkun, were accused of sharing the illegally acquired money.

The court took Zhou's age and physical condition into account when hearing the case. He was allowed to sit through the trial with his handcuffs removed.

The judge said Chinese law has no provisions about the sentencing of the country's oldest citizens, and Zhou may spend time in prison.

"If the charges are affirmed, Zhou will be sentenced to at least 10 years in prison," the judge said.

TV commercial 'experts' exposed as actors by Internet sleuth

By Wang Yu

From Sun Shiyou to Sun Yun and then Zhang Guoxing, three experts shown in different TV commercials were identified by a netizen as one person. The silver-haired old man was also introduced as professor Lu Qing, director of the Institute of Male Health of China and director of the urological department of Peking Medical College Hospital in another advertisement. But the hospital's HR department confirmed that it was all a lie.

Liangxin2009, the ID of the netizen who exposed the fraudulent expert on 163.com, was from Jinan, Shandong Province. He also exposed 10 actors and actresses who have played the roles of experts in a variety of fields and posted screen captures of their commercials on the Internet. Decently dressed and scholarly looking, one of the actors even wore the same tie in every commercial.

Some of the actors used to appear in TV dramas. Sun Jiantian, who used to play the role of the grandma in the popular



No-name actors appear in TV commercials with different names and in different positions.

Photos provided from TV commercials

sitcom *Home With Kids* was also blamed for misleading consumers. The actress did not act as an expert, but she claimed to suffer from 10 diseases in different commercials including liver disease, nephropathy, cardiopathy, emphysema and periodontal disease. She said all were cured by the product she was advertising.

"She could be almost half-dead if all she said on TV was true," the netizen said on the Internet. But Liangxin2009 is obviously a temporary ID used to expose the fake experts. It was registered on December 31, 2008, and all of his topics were about the same issue.

Actors playing roles as experts in commercials are not a secret in the advertising and TV industries. "There are many agencies which cooperate with advertising companies by offering appropriate actors," said Song Miao, a graduate from the TV and film department of Beijing Normal University.

Students who major in acting are also always asked to play roles in TV commercials for pay. "Most of us don't accept the invitations," Song said. Expats are also asked to act as foreign experts.

Such expert figures no doubt are placed in the advertisement to boost its persuasiveness. Accord-

ing to China's advertising laws, even real experts are not allowed to appear in advertisements for medicine or medical equipment. Since 2005, the government has stepped in to ban illegal TV commercials and enact new ordinances. The Shandong Administration for Industry and Commerce quashed 36 illegal advertisements last year.

"I never believe these advertisements," said Wang Yibin, a civil servant in a government press management department. "But to most low-class viewers, especially those in rural areas, everything on TV is authoritative and they can be easily misled by such commercials."

Grassroots Spring Festival Gala crumbles on New Year's eve



Shi mengqi

By Wang Yu

Since December, the "Robin Hood" Spring Festival gala was a hot topic for mainstream newspapers and Web sites. The show, met with praise and criticism, brought fame to its organizer Shi Mengqi and gave him an outlet for his ideas.

Failed broadcast

On the night of January 25, Spring Festival Eve of 2009, netizens scoured the Internet in search of a way to watch the Robin Hood Spring Festival Gala. Because of the millions of visits, the broadcast channel of MASTV (Macao Asia Satellite Television) was buckled and was unable to stream the show to viewers.

In the end, only a few netizens succeeded. "Robin Hood Spring Festival Gala-joke's on us" was the topic New Year's Day at portal Web sites in the Sinosphere.

"I knew from the beginning that I would be criticized and was pre-



Shi Mengqi says he hopes his show will be broadcast successfully next year with new technical support.

Photos provided by Shi Mengqi

pared for that. After all, no one can escape the judgment of the masses when one tries to bring a project into reality," Shi said. The 36-year-

old man from Sichuan saw the rise and fall of his show during the last three months, but the difficulties were hardly enough to depress him.

"Plan for the best and prepare for the worst, that's my way of doing things," he said.

Tough road from stage to home

MASTV was the only streaming media operator to carry the show. GZSTV (Guizhou Satellite Television), which had promised its venue and equipment to Shi's production team, reneged after certain government departments leaned on it. The Chinese IT giant Tencent and online video site Uusee.com also pulled out shortly before the broadcast.

The latest crusade to "purge" the Chinese Internet of "vulgar" content may be part of the reason Shi's supporters bailed on the show. An official announcement from Tencent.com said the Robin Hood Spring Festival gala could not be classified as an unclean program, but in the end it considered the live broadcast too big of a gamble to air.

The final version of the show on MASTV's Web site was actually a dress rehearsal recorded before the broadcast day. "Live broadcast was impossible without (their) technical support. So I let the camera team of MASTV record the rehearsal to make sure at least someone could watch it," Shi said.

The venue was another problem. Shi rented a studio to record the rehearsal. Contrary to the official information he has released before, Shi said the production team included only five people. There were no sponsors. "The whole operation cost me almost 300 thousand yuan," Shi said.

Swindlers crept into the acting team. "They first tried to get a chance to perform. But they were

so bad we couldn't put them in the show. Then they tried to blackmail us. One guy even called the police to insist that we owed him 4,000 yuan in travel expenses. Another claimed to have a good relationship with some government department and said he could make the work easier, but all he wanted was money," Shi said.

The hits came one after another. When Shi tried to upload the video to sites like Tudou.com or Youku.com, his attempts failed. "The video was blocked as failing the 'content examination' every time we put it up, but I have no idea what official policy caused the blocking of our Gala."

Maybe next year

This year's grassroots effort to upstage CCTV's New Year's Gala was a failure. "I think the most important point of my show was to offer people other options on Spring Festival Eve. It's not a competition, but a party for our class," Shi said.

Shi has held 10 jobs since he graduated from college in Beijing. "I always do things which I am interested in," he said. Shi learned cinematography in 2007 by chance and soon started a business to train wedding hosts. "No matter how much trouble we ended up in the last few months, I always had the confidence to carry out my ideas," he said.

"I also met many participants with touching stories. Those Qiang actors from the Sichuan disaster area dug out their musical instrument from the debris to join us. I just regret I couldn't help as many people to see the show as I promised. May be next year, I'll give it another shot," Shi said.

Overseas students take leap into export business

By Zheng Lu

The feet of Beijing's fashionable women have been adorned by Minnetonka boots, a brand popular with Hollywood stars. The brand has not set up stores in China and none of them went abroad to buy their boots. Nine out of 10 purchased the boots online.

As the Internet shopping replaces trips to the mall for younger shoppers, and since the financial crises has created a favorable exchange rate for the yuan, many people have found that the prices of international products have dropped dramatically.

More and more Chinese students studying abroad have taken notice of the popularity of imports to start their own business exporting goods back to their home county.

Sylvia Hao, a Chinese student who went to study in Hawaii two years ago, found cosmetics there were much cheaper than on the mainland. She bought some for her friends back home and mailed the products from time to time.

The problem was that the postage was too expensive and

began from 180 yuan. It did not turn out to be a business opportunity until her friend found the classmates were all interested in those products. Another friend, Chris Wu, who studied at the Communication University of China, posted the information about overseas purchases on her college's BBS last December.

Within a few days the post became one of the hottest on the Web. Zhang Nuan, a buyer, said she wanted to order a pile of makeup because even with Hao and Wu making a 15 percent profit, the makeup was still cheaper than buying domestically. Group postage cut the shipping fees dramatically.

Nan Hongyu, a graduate from Beijing Normal University who now lives in the US, is a much proficient importer. He has an online store at Taobao.com that mainly sell IT products. Nan said he started the business to pay the cost of living overseas. American digital cameras, video cameras and PCs are available in his store. He said he earns 100 to 1,000 yuan on different items. Even so, the products are cheaper than in China: some of the PCs are as much as several

thousand yuan less.

Although the business seems profitable and tempting, it faces the risk of losing profits and products during spot checks by customs.

Chris Wu said since the tariff on cosmetics is very high, usually as much as 50 percent of the product's price, once her box is checked she loses all her profits covering the tax. There is a limitation on how many things each person can send without added tax, and group purchases often exceed these limits. Customs holds the package until the pickup pays the tariff. To reduce the risk, sellers often divide their articles into several smaller boxes.

"It is not the best way to buy expensive things," said Wang Jun, a lawyer who specializes in Commercial Law. He said no formal law covers these online exporters, and said it would be hard for the Department of Industry and Commerce to supervise personal overseas purchasers.

Buyers take some risks, he said, reminding shoppers to always read the feedback of a seller before clicking "Buy."

How creative is Beijing's creative industry

By Annie Wei

"Creative" seems like a trendy word. The average urban dweller loves hopping the creative markets like "Imart" organized in Nanluoguxiang or in Shangdu Soho. The inspiring stories of individuals who run small creative businesses have been covered in magazines like *City Pictorial*. But behind the scenes is a coordinated government effort to develop the city's creative capability on all levels.



Invented in China

Zhang Jincheng, director of the China Creative Industry Research Center at the Beijing Academy of Sciences & Technology, published his first *China Creative Industry Development Report* in 2005.

In an interview with *Urban China* magazine last October, he talked about how the government had introduced creative industries into the national industry development plan.

"Central government supports 'culture production capability,' and in 2005, cities like Hong Kong, Taiwan, Shanghai and Beijing started taking the development of their creative industries seriously," Zhang said.

In 2006, the 11th Five-Year Plan set the path of development for the country's creative industry. It was considered the opening year of China's creative industry, and the first year the public started to notice it, he said.

The government says China's creative industry draws on the country's rich cultural background, and each city should position its creative industry based on the city's own features.

As the political and cultural center, Beijing is expected to lead the creative industry. After all, it has the most performing art groups and agencies and produces 50 percent of the nation's publications, TV episodes and movies every year. According to Beijing Statistics Bureau, the city's per capita GDP reached 61,500 yuan in 2008.

John Howkins, recognized as the 'father of creative industry,' said creativity and innovation are why Europe and America lead in art, design and technology. There is no reason for China to be left behind.

Culture does not equal creation

Many government officers like former mayor Wang Qishan and Liu Qi emphasized the importance of Beijing developing its culture and creative industry.

In Beijing, the government announced that they have built 18 clusters to promote the development of culture creative industries.

These include a digital entertainment demonstration base in Shijingshan; a creative base in Zhongguancun; art performances along Chang'an Avenue at venues like the National Theater; Panjiayuan antique and art trade zone; Gaobei-

dian folk culture industry zone; Dashanzi art zone; Songzhuang artists' village and Shishahai tourists spot; and Happy Valley theme park.

The government is eager to turn popular spots into future GDP growth engines.

However, its efforts seem out of touch. Can any average visitor connect these places with creativity? Zhongguancun is known for cheap electronic products; Happy Valley is a park and 798 has turned from a grassroots artist community into a tourist spot with art as a side attraction.

In mid-December, the third Beijing International Culture and Creative Industry Exhibition was held by several culture companies, TV and newspaper organizations. When *Beijing Today* interviewed media industry workers, most said they had no ideas what it was.

According to its Web site, it was a platform to present cultural activities. In reality, it lacked any excitement, or even creation.

Creating creativity

The government continues to throw money in hopes of stimulating development, but now people are asking whether it is too much trying to directly manipulate the creative industry. Too much government intervention could be scaring potential creative right out of the industry. Its efforts lack any coordination, something critical in any successful business model.

Some of the 18 creative industry zones have nice offices and preferential policies. A cab ride around North Second Ring Road by Yonghegong reveals signs of China's budding animation base. But everyone still asks, "What's inside? Who is working there, paying the rent and keeping the business running?"

Kate Oakley, a writer and policy analyst who specializes in cultural industries, cultural policy and regional development, said initiatives that try to manufacture creative hubs are less successful than those that consolidate existing creative activity. **Manufacturing a successful creative sector from scratch is an impossible process – creativity is not generated, it emerges.**

Michael Keanne, a principal research fellow for Creative Innovation at the Queensland University of Technology in Australia and author of *Created in China: the Great New Leap Forward* (Routledge, 2007), said there is a **huge problem in the animation industry**

because the lack of value in the content market drove its businesses back into manufacturing.

Shattered plans

Not every expert agrees with that. Some think Chinese characteristics distinguish the local creative industry from any other country's.

"I find it hard to agree with the common perception of a conflict between state control and creativity. I see globalizing cities such as Beijing and Shanghai as fertile sites for creativity and new possibilities. Real creative talents can find inspiration. They are able to navigate freely, to bypass the creative controls," Xuefei Ren, a scholar teaches urban theory and sociology at Michigan State University, told *Urban China*.

Ren has a point. The officially defined creative clusters might not be considered as creative by the public; yet people can find interesting and creative spots throughout the city.

Plastered T-Shirt in Nanluoguxiang, Lost-and-found, a vintage furniture store; jewelry design workshop at Nali Mall; and the Chen Xingfu-design toy workshop built their businesses on creativity.

Dominic Johnson-Hill, the British man behind Plastered, said he turned his initial investment of 40,000 yuan into US \$500,000; Lost-and-Found has allowed franchise stores in other cities and may soon move abroad; Zhang Xiaoyin, the Chinese man behind brand Chen Xingfu, opened his stores online and opened offline franchises in several cities.

In Shanghai, Tianzifang is considered as a creative cluster with many designers, design boutiques, coffee shops selling magazines and designed pieces.

"The difference between the creative scene in Beijing and Shanghai is that many small creative clusters are formed in Shanghai with enough consumers to support the area. In Beijing, it's more like creative individuals show up one here and one there," Yang Guowei, a freelance designer and photographer, said.

Last June, when visiting an Imart in Shangdu SoHo, Amelia Wang, a PR agent, complained that although it was a so-called creative market, it was more like hand craft vendors with little or any creation. "It is just starting. Everything has its own way to develop," Joanna Chen, her friend, said.

Creative market held in Dashanzi



Tianzifang, Shanghai



Beijing's culture and creative industry expo



The animation industry is popular with young consumers. CFP Photos

Chinese confidence strong amid financial crisis

Premier Wen Jiabao ended the fifth leg of what is referred to as his "Journey of Confidence" in Europe on Monday. He is under fire because of a slump in the country's economy – which, he acknowledges, slowed sharply in the period after the August Olympics in Beijing.

But in London, he was the man of the moment. Tony Blair, the former UK prime minister, and David Cameron, the leader of the Con-

servative Party, both waited in the wings of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel to meet the Chinese Premier. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last week, delegates hung on his every word.

On February 1, Wen accepted an interview with Lionel Barber, editor of the *Financial Times*, and talked about China's role in dealing with the global financial crisis and democracy in the country.

Wen Jiabao: I want to make clear here that I will be most sincere in all my answers, but I may not tell you everything.

Stable renminbi benefits all

Lionel Barber: This past year, there was more pressure on China regarding the renminbi and the treasury secretary referred to China "manipulating" its currency. Have you received assurances from President Obama that America will be more accommodating, and what do you say to those charges that you are manipulating your own money?

Wen: To allege that China is manipulating its currency exchange rate is completely unfounded. From the second half of 2005, we have started to conduct reforms in China's exchange rate regime.

Now we have in place a market-based-managed floating exchange rate regime with a reference to a basket of currencies. This regime is consistent with China's actual conditions and meets China's actual needs.

I want to make very clear here that it's to maintain the basic stability of the Chinese renminbi on a reasonable and balanced level. It's not only in the interests of China but also the world economy. It is in the interests of the efforts of the international community in overcoming the financial crisis.

Many people have not come to see this point. If we have drastic fluctuations in the renminbi exchange rate it will only be a big disaster.

China can't save capitalism

Barber: I asked the question because for 30 years, some people have said capitalism will save China, and now maybe people are saying China must save capitalism.

Wen: Well, I don't see it that way. I still have a very clear mind on this particular point. China remains a big developing country with a 1.3 billion population. We do face arduous tasks, and our way ahead will be a long one.

If you have seen the Chinese cities in the coastal areas, maybe you didn't see much difference between those cities and London. But if you have been to China's rural areas, particularly the western areas of China, you will see a big gap.

I firmly believe that running our own affairs well is the biggest contribution to mankind. I think there are three must-dos. First, we must address both the symptoms and root causes of the problem. One should not only tend to the head when the head aches, or tend to the foot when the foot hurts: we must enhance cooperation rather than enter into a confrontational

relationship; we must run our own affairs well respectively, instead of shifting troubles to others.

Democracy with Chinese features

Barber: Premier Wen, I've been told if I ask a political question, I have to be very careful.

Wen: Ask any question you want.

Barber: I have to be careful, because [according to the saying in] Mandarin, I will get hat, shoes and gloves. But looking to the future, could you imagine there being direct elections to the National People's Congress, say, in 10 years?

Wen: Well, actually, I think economic life and political life are not separable from each other. Let me address this political question from you from an economic perspective. We are undertaking both economic restructuring and political restructuring, and both are very important.

Without successful political restructuring, one can't ensure success in our economic restructuring. The goal in our political restructuring endeavor is to promote socialist democracy and to better ensure people's rights to democratic election, democratic decision making, democratic management and democratic supervision.

The society that we desire is one of equity and justice, is one in which people can achieve all-around development in a free and equal environment.

In the eyes of the West, it seems that the Chinese are afraid of democracy or elections. Actually, this is not true. As I told the press during the press conference of the National People's Congress session early last year, only when people trust you will they support your office. Now we have direct elections at the village level and also direct elections of people's deputies at the township level.

At the same time, I have always believed that if the people have the ability to run the village affairs well, they are capable of running the township affairs and the county affairs, and then running the provincial affairs. In this entire process, we should take a step-by-step approach in light of China's own conditions, and to develop a democracy with Chinese features.

Barber: So there's a bit more room for democracy and a bit more room for dissent as part of a democracy?

Wen: Well, I don't think a government should feel afraid of its own people. I think it should create opportunities for the people to better hold the government accountable.

(By Huang Daohen)



Wen said at the forum that China is confident of weathering the financial crisis. Xinhua Photo

Protester throws shoe at Wen

Premier Wen Jiabao visited Cambridge University Monday where he delivered a speech stressing mutual understanding and cooperation between China and the world.

A German student disrupted Wen's speech, throwing a shoe but missing its target. Wen paused for about one minute and then continued his speech.

"Teachers and students, this kind of dirty trick cannot stop friendship between the Chinese and the British people," Wen said, followed by applause.

University officials quickly removed the protester from the auditorium, arresting him later on suspicion of a public order offense.

On its Web site, the chancellor of Cambridge University released a statement expressing regret for the man's behavior, saying the university is a place for considerate argument and debate, not for shoe-throwing.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry also voiced dissatisfaction over the incident.

TV reports shoe-throwing

China's national broadcaster hesitated for hours over the sensitive footage of a protester in Britain throwing a shoe at Premier Wen Jiabao. But finally it ran it Tuesday.

The move was a remarkable display of openness – but the footage already was leaking into China via satellite television and the Internet. People said it showed the increasing power of such media to erode strict information controls.

"It is impossible for a country to shut out a piece of news," Shao Peiren, head of Zhejiang University's communications research institute, said.

The broadcast might also help the government by appealing to Chinese patriotism. Wen is the leadership's most popular figure, and he emerged a hero after last year's devastating earthquake, calling himself "Grandpa Wen." The nickname has been embraced by some enthusiastic citizens.

Shoe-thrower charged

British police arrested the 27-year-old man who hurled abuse and then a shoe at Premier Wen Jiabao.

"Following an incident in the auditorium during the premier's speech earlier today, a man has been charged with a public order offense," a police spokeswoman said.

"The 27-year-old man has been charged with section four of the Public Order Act and will appear at Cambridge magistrates court on Tuesday, February 10." (Agencies)

Gov will appeal to WTO to halt Indian toy ban

The government is likely to seek help from the World Trade Organization (WTO) to investigate whether a six-month import ban on Chinese toys by India violates WTO trade rules, the *China Daily* reported Wednesday.

The move came after India announced a six-month ban on toy imports from China on January 23. Raj Kumar, president of the Toy Association of India, said India took the step in the interest of the economy and consumer safety.

The Mumbai-based All-India Toy Manufacturers Association was

reported as saying that Chinese imports account for over half of the retail toy market in India, estimated to be in the range of US \$500 million in 2007.

However, experts said it was a sign that the country would be leveraging WTO rules to help protect its manufacturers from illegal trade barriers by its trading partners.

Worries about protectionism are piqued as the global financial crisis spreads. Many toy manufacturers in the region complained about cuts in imports by India.

"The ban can't last. The Indian side is doomed to lose in court if the Chinese government appeals to the WTO Dispute Settlement Body," the *China Daily* quoted Fu Donghui, managing director of Allbright Law Firm Beijing, as saying.

Fu said the government used to keep silent, but has now resorted to the WTO to prevent trade partners violating trade rules.

Premier Wen Jiabao also lashed out at trade protectionism policies adopted by those countries in his speech at the World Economic Forum held at Davos last week.

He discussed protectionism issue with Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown when he was in London this week after US President Barack Obama put the "buy American clause" in the US \$825 billion stimulus bill late last month.

Exports, being the mainstay of the economy, have taken a downturn. Statistics show the country exported US \$7.34 billion worth of toys between January and October last year, which was 16.6 percent less than in the previous year.

(By Huang Daohen)

Largest trade fair cuts prices

The country's largest trade fair has decided to slash prices for the first time to attract more exhibitors amid the global crisis, the *China Daily* reported Tuesday.

Booths at the China Import and Export Fair in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, will be reduced by between 1,000 yuan and 2,000 yuan, it reported.

But the cut has been criticized as insufficient as firms typically have to pay 30,000 yuan to rent a nine-square-meter booth for the three weeks in April and May that the event lasts, according to the paper.

"It would make more sense to reduce the charges by 10 to 15 percent," Lin Zhongyong, an executive from a company in Chaozhou city, said.

The fair, which takes place twice a year, has felt the pinch from the financial crisis.

The previous event, last October and November, was attended by a total of 22,341 exhibitors, but according to the fair's Web site as few as 174,562 overseas buyers came.

Volkswagen plans to delay plant expansion

Volkswagen AG plans to postpone expanding a plant in southwest China by a year as a slowing economy curbs automobile demand in the country, the *Oriental Morning Post* reported Wednesday.

FAW Volkswagen, the European firm's venture with FAW Group, one of China's three biggest automakers, has postponed an additional 200,000 annual capacity plant in the city of Chengdu to 2011, the newspaper said, citing unnamed sources.

The new assembly line was scheduled to start making Jetta and Sagitar sedans next year, it added.

Volkswagen's China spokesman said he had no information on the matter, while FAW Volkswagen executives could not be reached.

FAW Volkswagen set up the Chengdu plant in July 2007 with an initial capacity of 150,000 units. The facility plans to have a total capacity of 350,000 units eventually, according to the report.

Siemens adds additional investment

German industrial giant Siemens has announced that it intends to invest considerably more in China than previously planned.

Besides the investments of around €1 billion by 2010 that were announced at the end of 2006, an additional €150 million is now earmarked for investment over the next three years in, among other things, the expansion of production capacity for alternative energy.

Richard Hausmann, president and CEO of Siemens' Chinese subsidiary stated that although overall energy consumption in China is slowing down, the need for environmentally-friendly and efficient technologies is unchanged.

"China is our largest market after Germany and the US and a key driver of our worldwide business. With the planned investments, we want to further expand our presence in this vital market," Hausmann said. (Agencies)

Court orders automakers to compensate German company



The German-designed Neoplan Starliner (left) and the Chinese-made A9 coach (right) have a very similar overall look. Xinhua Photo

The First Intermediate People's Court of Beijing has ordered three Chinese automakers to pay 20 million yuan in compensation and 1.16 million yuan in legal fees to German auto company Neoplan which sued them for patent infringement.

The court said the A9 coach produced by Zhongwei Passenger Bus and Zhongda Industrial Group China has

essentially the same design as the Neoplan Starliner. The companies have been ordered to stop producing the A9 and Beijing Zhongtong Xinghua Auto Sales has been ordered to halt sales of the vehicles.

The Neoplan Starliner was developed in 2005 by German busmaker Neoplan Bus GmbH and was patented. The company discovered in 2006 that the A9

coach produced by the Zhongwei Passenger Bus Company was almost identical to its Starliner.

Zhongwei Passenger Bus Company is a subsidiary company of Zhongda Industrial Group China. The defendants said the A9 coaches were developed independently, but the court ruled that apart from some slight differences, the overall look of the A9

buses was the same as the Neoplan Starliner.

Neoplan Starliner buses are produced both in Germany and in Zhejiang Province by the Youngman Coach Company. The selling price in China is around 2 million yuan. Youngman said that the appearance of the A9 bus on the market had not affected sales of its Starliner.

(Xinhua)

Market Watch

Coffee makers say domestic demand may increase 20 percent annually

Coffee demand may expand by 20 percent a year if roasters offer products suited to local consumer budgets and tastes, Japanese trading company Marubeni said.

The number of coffee roasting companies in China has increased to 30 from 25 a year earlier as sales rise in Shanghai and other coastal cities, Kazuyuki Kajiwaru, general manager in Marubeni's coffee section, said.

Starbucks, the world's largest coffee-shop chain, said last year China had the potential to become its largest market out-

side the US as the number of middle-class consumers rises. Japanese roasters such as Tokyo-based Unicafe are targeting China as opportunities decrease in a mature home market with a gradually declining population.

"We estimate coffee consumption in China is growing by 20 percent year on year, or at the same pace of increase in roasters," Kajiwaru said. The Chinese market will probably keep expanding at a similar pace as China has 200 million potential coffee drinkers, he said.

China's coffee consumption

is probably 30,000 metric tons a year, about 7.5 percent of the Japanese demand of 400,000 tons, Kajiwaru said. Marubeni established a coffee-roasting subsidiary in Shanghai in 2006.

"We believe the Chinese market has a potential to grow depending on the quality and price of coffee products," Kajiwaru said. Coffee at some upmarket stores costs 40 yuan in China, as expensive as in Tokyo, while Chinese roasters also failed to meet local preferences for a strong flavor, he said.

US-based Aroma Coffee roasts imported and domestic beans,

Kajiwaru said. China produces 25,000 tons of beans a year, of which 5,000 tons are the robusta variety, grown in Hainan and mainly used in instant coffee, and the rest are arabica beans produced in Yunnan and preferred by coffee house operators.

China sells about 60 percent of its coffee output overseas, and half of the exports are directed to Japan for production of instant coffee crystals, Kajiwaru said. The country also imports 15,000 tons of coffee a year, including instant coffee, he said.

(Agencies)

TV stations accused of illegal names and logos

By Huang Daohen

Forty percent of the country's television stations on satellite, including the China Central Television (CCTV), are violating the law by using improper names, the Ministry of Education said Tuesday, charging that some TV station logos are peppered with socially misleading English words.

The ministry said in an open letter that TV broadcasters should incorporate more Chinese characters in their names because they violate national language laws.

According to the law on language use, broadcasters are supposed to use standard Chinese unless they have a particular need to use a Chinese dialect or have been approved to broadcast in a foreign language.

This requirement extends to station logos, and the current problem lies in the use of English abbreviations such as CCTV and BTV for Beijing Television, according to the ministry's letter, posted on its Web site.

Stations should instead use Chinese characters or their pinyin equivalent. "A station logo, as an important symbol of a TV station, ought to comply with national rules and regulations on language so as to

uphold national culture," the letter said.

Over the past few years, 50 of the country's channels shown via satellite have used English abbreviations rather than Chinese characters or *pinyin* in their names and on their logos. Some programs use a mix of Chinese and English. This is not beneficial to pushing forward the common use of the national language, the ministry said.

BTV changed its logo at the start of 2009, a design that it said had been approved by the ministry and was therefore legal.

There was no response from CCTV on the issue as of press time, but a CCTV employee told the *Beijing Youth Daily* they were not aware of the violation. Since the logo had been in use for decades, it was a valuable trademark that should not be arbitrarily changed, she said. "If changes are actually necessary, it would require a directive from people in charge."

This is not the first time CCTV is receiving criticism for its name. In 2006, an online campaign called on the station to change its name to China National TV, arguing that the name CCTV overemphasizes the central government's control of the network.

The Ministry of Education says "TV" is against the rules.

CFP Photo

Comment

Follow international norm

The media should set an example in its use of the nation's standard written and spoken language.

From a global point of view, it is a tradition for well-known international TV stations to use abbreviations in their own language, like the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), the US's NBC (National Broad-

casting Company) and Japan's NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai).

— William, counselor

Not a measure of patriotism

The country's economic boom in the past decades has created greater self-confidence in its language and culture. But the logo or name of a TV station does not necessarily reflect patriotism.

English has become hugely popular in China, and the Ministry of Education's own Web site address bears its English initials, MOE.

— Roberto Chen, editor

How do you talk to common people?

I find it odd that English abbreviations are so prevalent in China. Aren't Chinese firms and TV stations targeting

Chinese audiences, including farmers who don't know English?

— "Otoh," blogger

No need for changes

There is no need to change names. It would confuse the public and damage the brand's value. Names like CCTV, in particular, are already recognized and accepted by the public.

— Dora, tourism advisor

Vegetarian teacher prompts students' meat strike

By Zhang Dongya

A teacher advocated vegetarianism too well among her students at the No. 86 Primary School in Urumchi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The result was most of her students refusing to eat meat, which worried parents, the *China Youth Daily* reported Monday. Most people consider the teacher's behavior radical and extreme, and not the proper way to educate pupils.

The teacher, identified under the pseudonym Pan Xiaoqin in the report, asked her students and their parents in a meeting to stop eating meat to maintain health and to protect the environment. In Pan's opinion, students and parents should preserve animals to help maintain ecological balance.

The grade two students refused

to eat meat upon returning home. "They obeyed the teacher and refused meat for dinner. But they need meat, which supplies protein to their growing bodies, and we had to scold them or even beat them to make them eat it," a parent surnamed He said.

Pan asked parents to use tofu as a meat substitute, and taught them how to cook it in various ways. Most parents did not consider this acceptable.

The school's headmaster, Xu Hongmei, said Pan has been teaching for more than 10 years and has a good track record, but parents and other teachers did not approve of her "vegetarianism education."

"It is good to publicize the idea that vegetarianism is a good way to stay healthy and to protect the environment, but we never thought it would lead students to go on a meat strike," Xu said.

Comment

Legumes can't equal meat

The primary school years are vital to the growth of children, and animal protein is indispensable. Some legumes may look or taste like meat, but they cannot replace the protein found in meat. Children will become undernourished if they just eat vegetables and fruits.

— Guo Qinghua, deputy director of the Institute of Clinical Nutrition in Xinjiang

Vegetarianism not for children

In the area of nutrition, the most important factor is the balance of nutrition inside the body — that is

to say we should maintain diversity of nourishment. Meat is rich in proteins and fats, which are necessities for growing bodies, especially those of children. Vegetarianism may be good for some people who are stricken with diseases that demand less meat intake, but not growing children.

— Zhao Haiyan, pharmacist at the Shenzhen Accordance Pharmaceutical Company

A lopsided view of environmental protection

The teacher's understanding of environmental protection and her teach-

ing methods need to be discussed. They are a bit radical.

It is true that the nitrous oxide produced by the animal husbandry industry is one of the factors for global warming, according to some data, but this should not make us stop eating meat. Our bodies need meat. There are many other aspects of environmental protection, like planting trees and collecting litter; going on a meat strike is just too far-fetched.

— Guo Yun, founder of the Xinjiang Gobi Oasis Association of Environmental Protection Volunteers

Spot of tea wins British MP Chinese bride

By Venus Lee

A British Conservative MP tapped as a future party leader is about to marry his Chinese girlfriend following a trip to Xi'an. He asked the woman's father permission to marry her on New Year's Eve.

Shadow Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt, 43, met the woman, identified only as Lucia, 32, a year ago through his educational business Hotcourses.

Hunt proposed to Lucia on Christmas Eve in the Surrey village of Shere, where his parents live. But he had to travel more than halfway across the world to Xi'an, the home of the Terracotta Warriors, before he could be certain the marriage could go ahead.

At a New Year's Eve party at the home of Lucia's family, Hunt asked her father for his daughter's hand in marriage. But he had to depend on Lucia to translate for him because her father does not speak a word of English.

"I asked her father to come with me for a cup of tea. He must think I was mad and he said it is New Year's Eve, why do you want a cup of tea?" Hunt said.

"I wanted to ask him if I could marry his daughter in the traditional Chinese way, but I had to get Lucia to translate because he does not speak English. It was wonderful that he said yes. Then we celebrated with large amounts of rice wine."

Their love affair survived an unpleasant episode in October last year when a British newspaper article described Hunt as "an ideal husband material

except for the small matter of a Chinese girlfriend."

Lucia phoned him and demanded to know why she had been dismissed as a "small matter." Hunt assured her she meant the world to him. Since then, Hunt has shielded his bride-to-be from the media, refusing to reveal details about her.

Hunt has had a meteoric rise in the Conservative Party since his election to Parliament in 2005 for the safe Tory seat of South West Surrey. Because of his early support of David Cameron, the Tory leader, he was fast-tracked to the Shadow Cabinet within two years of arriving at Westminster.

Hunt is the son of Royal Navy Admiral Sir Nicholas Hunt and the grandson of an army brigadier.

He graduated with a First in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from Magdalen College, Oxford, and did a short stint as a trainee management consultant before travelling to Japan to teach English.

From his experiences there, he saw an opportunity in publishing educational guidebooks for students who wanted to study abroad. When he returned to the UK, he set up his own company, Hotcourses, which is now the UK's largest publisher of guides and Web sites to help people find a course or college.

Hunt is also a keen dancer and says his favorite is the sensual Brazilian lambada, which is performed with the partners' bodies pressed together.



Jeremy Hunt and Lucia

Photo provided by Jeremy Hunt

Custody dispute between Dutchman and Chinese girlfriend

By Zhang Dongya

A Dutchman named Salib Lbrahim who was lodging at the Golden Kintel Hotel in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, found his 3-year-old daughter missing last Sunday. He called the police and located the child, and said she was taken away by a Chinese woman, the local *Jiangnan City Daily* reported Wednesday.

Lbrahim, 48, checked in at the hotel with his daughter Maria last month. On Sunday morning, Lbrahim discovered the girl missing after he looked for her in the bedroom, staircase and coffee house. With the help of hotel employees, he reported the case to the Xufang Police Station of the municipality's public security bureau (PSB).

Lbrahim told police Maria was his daughter by a girlfriend, a Nanchang native who was currently in the Netherlands, and that they were going through custody problems. He said Maria was taken by a woman surnamed Huang, who claimed to be a



Salib Lbrahim's daughter was taken from his hotel.

Photo provided by Jiangnan City Daily

phone, denied that Lbrahim was Maria's father. Fang said her daughter should remain with Huang.

Huang said Maria was sent to her family for temporary care in May, because her mother had to work in the Netherlands. Lbrahim, meanwhile, came to visit Maria in Nanchang last Christmas. Though Fang refused to let the father and daughter meet, Huang sometimes brought Maria to the hotel where Lbrahim stayed.

On the girl's last visit, Lbrahim agreed to bring Maria back within the day, but he failed to keep his word. Huang then secretly took Maria out of the hotel the following day.

Fang said on the phone that Maria was supposed to live with Huang and learn Chinese until she turned four, at which time she would be sent to school in the Netherlands.

The police said they will help Lbrahim and Fang solve their dispute.

friend of the child's mother.

The police then reported the case to the Entry-Exit Administration of the Nanchang Municipal PSB.

Maria was eventually found inside Huang's home. Lbrahim's girlfriend, surnamed Fang, when contacted by



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Australian university alumni gather



Stephen McDonnell, an award-winning foreign correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, spoke before fellow Australian alumni.

Photo by Venus Lee

By Venus Lee

Alumni from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) held a gathering at the Bookworm cafe Tuesday to discuss last year's China events. Stephen McDonnell, a UTS alumnus and award-winning foreign correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), came as a special guest and talked about his reporting experiences last year, particularly the coverage of the Sichuan earthquake.

McDonnell was awarded a Walkley Journalism Award for Best Coverage of the Asia-Pacific Region for his reports of major events in China. He witnessed rescue efforts in Wenchuan County, the epicenter of last year's May 12 quake, and vividly recalled scenes of devastation.

"All the buildings were smashed. The air was filled with

the odor of dead bodies. Rescuers worked all through the night in driving rain and pretty lousy conditions to mount a rescue attempt and dig through rubble... Cooperation was pretty incredible after the earthquake," he said.

McDonnell entered the village with a volunteer doctor on foot. "The only way to get access to the place was on foot," he said.

He recalled that rescuers coming from the provincial capital Chengdu had to pass through difficult roads, places where they could not land helicopters because the weather was too bad. Once they arrived in the area, they heard people calling out from the rubble, but they were not really able to do more than dig with their hands because they did not have the equipment to move large amounts

of rubble.

McDonnell said 2008 was one of China's most significant and historical years for two reasons. One was the May 12 earthquake, and another was the Beijing Olympics, which brought the world's attention to China.

China showed its optimistic, confident and promising side during the Games. "Gorgeous buildings like the Bird's Nest, the Water Cube, Terminal 3 of the airport and the South Railway Station showed the world a fresh and energetic image of the country," McDonnell said.

When asked what he thought of CNN's reporting of the Tibetan turmoil last year, McDonnell criticized the US television network's performance. "Try to be fair to the country," he said.

Barry Van Wyk, an attendee, said McDonnell's talk showed him a new side of China.

"The activity aimed to enhance connection and communication among graduates of Australian universities," said Amanda Barry, communication manager of the Australia China Alumni Association (CCA), the organizer of the event.

The ACCA is open to all China-based graduates of Australian universities. It aims to promote Australian education through the successes of its graduates, and support its alumni in China through business and social networking, career development and related efforts. The ACCA was established in Beijing on September 21, 2007, and in Shanghai on July 30, 2008.

Running the business of giving

By Wang Yu

Non-profit organization Wokai held a fundraiser, Drinks for a Better World, at Sanlitun on Tuesday. The US-based group aims to help alleviate the plight of impoverished Chinese citizens, particularly those in rural areas, through microfinance.

The NGO, whose name means "I start" in Chinese, has drawn the attention of many foreigners, from university students who major in finance to professionals with an interest in China.

Wokai's two founders, Casey Wilson and Courtney McColgan, met while studying at Tsinghua University in 2006. Wilson came up with the idea of helping the impoverished, while McColgan wanted to build on her experience in microfinance and contribute to society.

Wilson's mother was a member of the first US delegation to visit the country after its "reopening" in 1979. Wilson, a native of Seattle, first came to China expecting to find a poor nation. The wealth she saw in Beijing confused her and made her realize the huge income gap between China's urban and rural

areas. Even as the economic boom offered increasing work opportunities to city dwellers, approximately 200 million people in rural areas continued to live on less than US \$1 (6.83 yuan) a day.

"Microfinance provides loans to poor people to help them start small businesses, and offers one of the best solutions to global poverty. A seamstress might borrow money to buy a sewing machine. This business generates stable income, which gives the seamstress and her family access to healthcare, improved housing or perhaps most importantly, education," Wokai said on its Web site, describing its work.

Foreign non-profit organizations are not allowed to register in China, so Wilson and McColgan had to do it in the States, while registering as a foreign business here.

Contributors can browse through the borrowers' profiles on Wokai's Web site and give tax-deductible loans. Wokai will then send the money to their field partners of microfinance institutions to be allocated to borrowers. Once a loan is fully paid, contributors may reinvest their money towards a different borrower.

Wokai has raised at least US \$25,000. "It's a small loan to a poor person that helps the recipient improve his or her life. A microentrepreneur will be able to send her children to school, build a home for her family and grow a new sense of confidence and pride in herself," Wilson said on the group's Web site. "It's about people and it's about trust. Contributors give because they can connect with microentrepreneurs, and field partners succeed because loan officers connect with borrowers."

Wokai works with local NGOs, the Chifeng Zhaowuda Women's Sustainable Development Association and the Association for Rural Development of Yilong County, to give loans to people in Inner Mongolia and Sichuan. Lenders can also choose to give an additional 10 percent to support Wokai's operating costs.

To date, Wilson and McColgan have opened three chapters in San Francisco, Seattle and New York staffed by skilled volunteers. "Many people asked, How am I supposed to make donations? So we put up the chapters," Wilson said during a presentation at Google.



Casey Wilson (right) at one of Wokai events.

Photo provided by Wokai.com

Event

Therapy with Certified Psychotherapist

Mike Heywood is a UK- and US-trained counselor and psychotherapist offering sessions to individuals, couples and families at The Yin Yang Community Center. He works with clients to address issues of anxiety, depression, stress, low self-esteem, grief and loss, anger and conflict, sexuality and relationships and trauma and abuse. He works under the code of ethics of the British Association for Counseling and Psychotherapy.

Where: The Yin Yang Community Center, Yard 1, Hegezhuang Cun, Cuigezhuang Xiang, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6431 2108

Walking Tour: Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City

This walk will provide information covering not only the history, planning, architecture, symbols and feng shui of Tiananmen Square and the palace, but also the life and fate of the emperors and eunuchs. Registration online or by phone call is essential.

When: February 6, 9 am - 12:30 pm

Where: China Culture Center, Kent Center, 29 Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6432 9341

Hook 'n' Cook

Participants can broaden their social network even as they sharpen their culinary skills. Every attendee is given a role towards preparing a signature dinner. Hook 'n' Cook gives people an opportunity to hook up with new people in a comfortable, highly sociable setting while at the same time cooking up a storm. It is a great way to meeting new people without going through the ordeal of making awkward small talk.

When: February 6, 7-10 pm

Where: Exit C of Bei Xin Qiao Subway Station (Subway Line 5)

Tel: 8915 3613

Cost: 150 yuan (includes a glass of wine)

Ski and Snowboard with Localnoodles Snow Team

Localnoodles will be sending busloads of Beijingers to area ski resorts every Saturday. Skiers of all levels are encouraged to get out of the city and meet new friends while enjoying a fun day outdoors. Fee includes transportation, VIP equipment, dinner and a drink upon return.

When: February 7, 8:30 am - 6 pm

Tel: 6416 7036

Cost: 350 yuan, including transportation and dinner at Blue Frog

(By Wei Ying)

Where to get free tickets to visit Zhengyangmen

By Annie Wei

Zhengyangmen, a gate into the ancient city of Beijing, which stands at the south end of Tian'anmen Square, is open to the public for free this month.

To mark the 60th anniversary of Beijing's liberation on January 31, 1949, a free exhibition and lecture was scheduled at Zhengyangmen on Tuesday. With the incentive of free souvenirs to the first 100 visitors, the event attracted over 2,000 people and organizers had to cancel it at the last minute.

Zhengyangmen opened to the public in 2006 following a year of repairs. Tickets cost 20 yuan during the peak season and 10 yuan off-season every year. During the regular season, it offers free entrance to up to 200 visitors who book in advance.

Zhengyangmen will allow 2,000 visitors free entry each day until February 28. A person can get

up to two free tickets to visit the place at a designated time. It is closed on Mondays.

Four places that distribute free tickets

Capital Museum
Where: 16 Fuxingmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District
Tel: 6337 0491, 6337 0492

Beijing Ancient Architecture Museum
Where: 21 Xiannongtan Dong Lu, Xuanwu District
Tel: 6304 5608

Dazhongsi Ancient Bell Museum
Where: 31-A Beisanhuan Xi Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 6255 0819

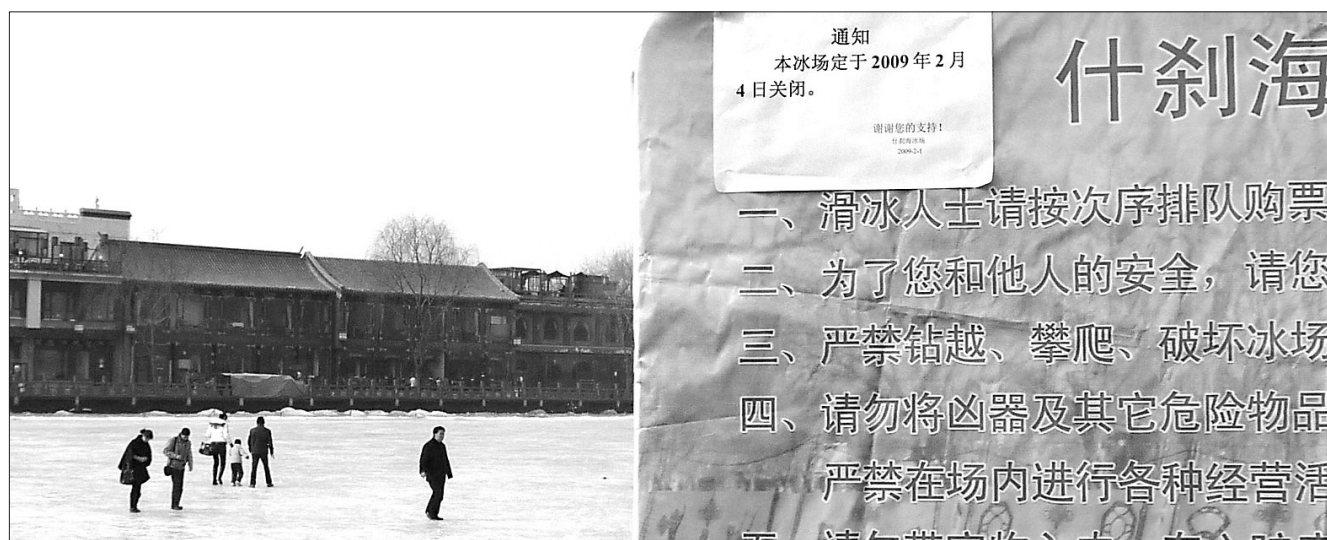
Kongmiao and Guozijian Museum
Where: 15 Guozijian Jie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 6404 1057
When: 9 am - 4 pm, every day



An exhibition around the PLA liberating Beijing 60 years ago is in Zhengyangmen.

CFP Photo

No more outdoor ice-skating



As the temperature rises up, government authorities announced the closure of all outdoor skating spots on lakes as of Wednesday.

CFP Photo

Traditional parade in Qianmen

By Annie Wei

To mark the Lantern Festival or the end of Spring Festival on February 9, a Chinese parade will take place along Qianmen Dajie.

The parade, called Caijie, is a traditional event that takes place after the repair of an important street. Qianmen Dajie was closed for renovation in 2007 and was reopened last year, a day before the start of the Beijing Olympics.

The parade will begin at 11 am, with participants from Beijing, Hebei and Shangdong provinces pushing off from the south gate of Zhengyangmen. It will feature traditional dances, like the lion dance.

The parade is open to the public, authorities said. Due to safety concerns, however, only 2,000 people will be allowed to enter Qianmen Dajie.

Business establishments are expected to hang some 500 lanterns painted with riddles, in accordance with tradition along the street.

Masters of lacquer, cloisonne enamel and jade engraving will showcase their skills on the north side of Zhushikou Dajie, south of Qianmen Dajie.

Bird's Nest gears up for performances



The Bird's Nest is one of the most popular destinations for local residents.

CFP Photo

By Venus Lee

From May, colorful performances will be presented at the Bird's Nest National Stadium. Visitors will also have a chance to see some of the equipment used during the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics.

Yang Weiying, a stadium official said the Bird Nest's staff has been thinking of how to utilize the place, but failed to reach an agreement with about a dozen domes-

tic performance companies.

At the end of the last year, stadium officials began negotiations with a foreign performance company during a trip to the US. Yang refused to name the company because an agreement has not yet been signed, but he said negotiations went smoothly leading to the planned shows in May.

"The performances will be divided into three main categories: daytime shows, night the-

ater shows and long-term and large-scale cultural and sporting events," Yang said.

The daytime shows will be made up of song-and-dance performances, while the night shows will present Olympics-related programs. The large-scale shows will be comprised of sporting events and grand cultural performances like the opera *Turandot*, which will be staged in August.

The stadium's third floor has long been set aside for restaurants. Over dinner, visitors can enjoy a spectacular view of the Olympic Green. "Diners will be reminded of great moments at the Bird's Nest during the Olympic Games," Yang said.

A total of 140 spaces will be leased out to individuals or companies. "According to the plan, the Bird's Nest upgrade will be more inclined toward leisure and body-building establishments," Yang said.

The entrance fee to the stadium will be increased from the current 50 yuan, but Yang said the new price is still being determined.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

When will people stop lighting firecrackers? I loved it for the first two days of the New Year, but now all I hear is bang bang bang, then a car alarm going off.

It should stop February 9, the 15th day of the first month of the lunar year.

What formalities are required in order to marry a Chinese national? What permits are needed? Is an interview with a government agency necessary?

Foreigners who wish to marry a Chinese citizen need to obtain A Letter of Eligibility to Marry from their home country or embassy. This document basically says there is no legal reason preventing the person from marrying. Not all embassies can issue this. The information should be available on embassy Web sites.

I'm planning to go to Shijiazhuang next month. I'd like to take my dog with me - a small Pekinese. Do you know if dogs are allowed on trains or long-distance buses?

You cannot take your dog with you on the train or bus like ordinary luggage. Prior to your trip, you will need to go through pet transportation procedures with the train station or long-distance bus company.

Can international magazines subscriptions be delivered to me direct in China?

You cannot subscribe to international publications through the China Post. But you can try the China National Publications Import and Export Corporation.

Where: 16 Gongti Dong Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6506 3082

I read in your column a few months ago when someone asking about buying used cars and where to get a good deal. Can you republish your reply? I'm looking for a small China-made van, ones with sliding doors on both sides.

There are quite a few second-hand vehicle markets in Beijing.

Beijing Ershou Jidongche Jiaoyi Shichang

Where: 123 Xi Lu, Nansihuan, Fengtai District

Tel: 5111 8888

Dongfang Jiye Guoji Qichecheng

Where: 1A Yaojiayuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5119 3111

Jingnan Qichecheng

Where: 260 Nansihuan (southeast corner of Majialu Bridge), Fengtai District

Tel: 8750 0865

Beijing Yayuncun Automobile Trade Market

Where: East side of Litang Lu (2 kilometers north of Tiantongyuan), Changping District

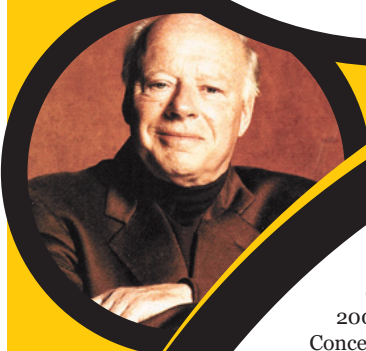
Tel: 6176 6699

(By Wei Ying)

By He Jianwei

Bernard Haitink, a prominent Dutch conductor, will turn 80 next month. His career has spanned more than five decades in the classic music world. Three years ago, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), one of the five American orchestras commonly referred to as the "Big Five," appointed Haitink as its principal conductor. Every conductor, including Haitink, has a sell-by date, he said, when he declined CSO's offer to be music director in 2007.

Throughout the 2008-2009 season, the CSO has celebrated Haitink's birthday, with seven weeks of subscription programming at the Orchestra Hall in Chicago and three tours to Europe, Asia and New York City's Carnegie Hall. Next weekend, Haitink and the CSO will perform at the National Center for the Performing Arts. Among the "Big Five," the CSO is the only one that has never been to China.



Amsterdam-born conductor Bernard Haitink has had a splendid record throughout his 50-year international conducting career. Before he became principal conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 2006, he spent 25 years at the helm of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in the Netherlands as its music director. Haitink brought the orchestra to the top of the heap.

Haitink previously held posts as music director of the Dresden Staatskapelle in Germany, the Royal Opera in London, the Glyndebourne Festival Opera in England and the London Philharmonic.

He is Conductor Laureate of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and Conductor Emeritus of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and has made frequent guest appearances with most of the world's leading orchestras.

Still young on stage

Haitink's hair is white now. His age and exhaustion show after every concert when he walks down from the platform. But when he takes up his baton, the years melt away. It seems that his conducting has not changed since he first began in the 1960s.

He knows his age, but he said his conducting career is different than others' careers in the music area. An 80-year-old conductor is hardly rare in the field. Italian conductor Arturo Toscanini and German conductor Otto Klemperer still performed into their 80s. Leopold Stokowski, well-known for his free-hand conducting style, conducted into his 90s.

Haitink said conductors have a huge advantage. They are not the singers or musicians. In their 80s, a singer's voice goes and a musician's fingers go stiff.

He said conducting technique is less subtle, so they can continue into old age. "I think maybe conducting is not something for young people. I started far too young with a world-famous orchestra. I still have sleepless nights about it sometimes – how was it possible that I could do this and that without any musical or human experience? It is a miracle that I survived," he said.

Haitink enjoyed every moment of cooperation with different talented artists and orchestras. His passion and enthusiasm for classical music bring him back to the stage again and again. "If I were to feel like an old man, I would not be able to do it any more, because conducting takes a lot of physical and mental strength, and I am under the illusion that I can still offer that to musicians."

The love of opera

In his conducting career, Haitink has conducted the complete symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Robert Schumann, Anton Bruckner and Gustav Mahler, and the complete piano concertos of Beethoven and Brahms, as well as many operas.

Melting

Belated debut of Bernard Haitink

But Haitink formally stated in 2004 that he would no longer conduct opera. But he made exceptions in 2007, directing three performances of *Parsifal* in Zurich in March and April and five of *Pelleas et Melisande* in Paris in June. "When I'm working with a symphony orchestra – and I'm an extremely lucky man that I'm always able nowadays to work with top orchestras – I think I'm mad to go back to the pit and have all these hassles with the singers and the directors and that whole shouting match!"

It seems opera carries many risks for a conductor, because he depends on the singers and directors in addition to the orchestra.

"Opera can sometimes be below par, because you have all sorts of problems with singers who don't live up to your expectations or who are getting ill and your having a substitute. The danger factor in opera is that the risk is bigger; there's no doubt. On the other side, the pit can generate an excitement unlike what you would find in a concert hall," he said.

But Haitink conducted the Ring Cycle three times, and the response of an audience after each opera was mind-boggling, he said. "It has such a wave of emotion which, in the concert hall, you only get with Mahler-sometimes – because that's also theatrical music. That isn't to say opera has better music, but the dimensions are different, and it can impress in an enormous way."

Caretaker of orchestras

Haitink stayed a quarter of a century in the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and was in charge of the London Philharmonic throughout the 1970s with 15 years in the Royal Opera House. Today, he fulfills a role he describes as "caretaker" in Chicago.

When the president of the CSO offered to make him music director, Haitink declined it and told the president the orchestra needed someone younger.

"I will never be a music director anywhere and never wanted to be one in America, because it's a hell of a job. Chicago got me on my terms. I only wanted to be a caretaker. I'm at my best when I don't have responsibility, but can add something out of my own free will," he said.

Haitink said as a senior conductor, his responsibility is to pass on the ideas and knowledge to young conductors. He thought the conductors who jealously guard their position are short-sighted. "Nature always takes its course; when one gets older, one has a bit more equilibrium and one sees more that one should try to help younger people find their way," he said.

But it is difficult in conducting. "The danger is that if there is a talent and he is successful, then he is immediately the darling of the media and things go too fast. There are examples of very talented conductors who go the wrong way because they've confused loudness with success."

away the years

nk and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra



**Chicago
Symphony Orchestra
Beijing Concert**

Where: Concert Hall, National Center
for the Performing Arts
When: Mahler's Symphony No 6 in A minor
"Tragic" on February 13, 7:30 pm; Haydn's
Symphony No 101 in D major "The Clock"
and Bruckner's Symphony No 7 on Febru-
ary 14, 7:30 pm
Admission: 1,380 yuan for VIP,
1,080, 780, 480 and 280 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Photos provided by National Center for Performing Arts



Nobel laureate's secret past

By Charles Zhu

All who study English as a foreign language know how hard it is to write as well as a native speaker, let alone fiction with terrific literary power.

But some people make it.

V.S. Naipaul, born in 1932 in Trinidad and Tobago and awarded the Nobel laureate for literature in 2001, is the best English writer outside the English-speaking world.

With the publication of *The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V. S. Naipaul* by Patrick French (554pp, Knopf, US\$30), readers can glimpse the complete life of a writer praised by the Swedish Academy as "a modern philosopher."

French used the personal archives of Naipaul at the University of Tulsato to produce a complete biography with all the complexities and contradictions, verging on madness, of a great literary mind.

In 1971, Naipaul became the first person of Indian descent to win a Booker Prize for his book *In a Free State*. He was praised "for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories."

His mother's family was local snobs and his father was a humble newspaperman, sensitive and psychic. As a failed writer, his father bore the scorn of his in-laws. The tragic fate of his father had immense influence on young Naipaul. He was imbued with indignation at high society. His mother's origin, however,

helped shape the boy. "Ma's bright, certain, robust slightly mocking tone of voice would be inherited by Vido; without the impetus of Ma and her family, his later achievements would have been impossible."

The first decisive moment in his career came when he won a prestigious scholarship to Oxford. After he graduated in the early 1950s, he found himself alone in London without a friend or publisher as he had attempted to write with the fires of a passionate youth.

The experience plunged him into a spiritual crisis. He was on the verge of madness when he was rescued by Patricia Hale, a quiet, intelligent and self-effacing Englishwoman. Naipaul desperately clung to her: "You saved me once, and it is from that rescue that I have been able to keep going — from Feb. 9 to today. I love you, and I need you. Please don't let me down. Please forgive my occasional lapses. At heart I am the worthiest man I know."

Naipaul was married to Patricia Hale, his helper, maid, cook, mother and the object of his occasional angers, for 41 years until her death by cancer in 1996. In the book, Naipaul admits to French that he mistreated and frequently cheated on her. He regularly visited prostitutes in London though it was without satisfaction.

Naipaul met a married Anglo-Argentine woman, Margaret Gooding, who was 30 and had three children from a previous marriage. This became the second

turning point in his career. Gooding was the opposite of Patricia, "tempestuous, cynical and sexy." The two began to strike up an affair. He often abandoned his wife to go traveling with Gooding, and their trips nurtured an infatuation fraught with physical and sexual violence.

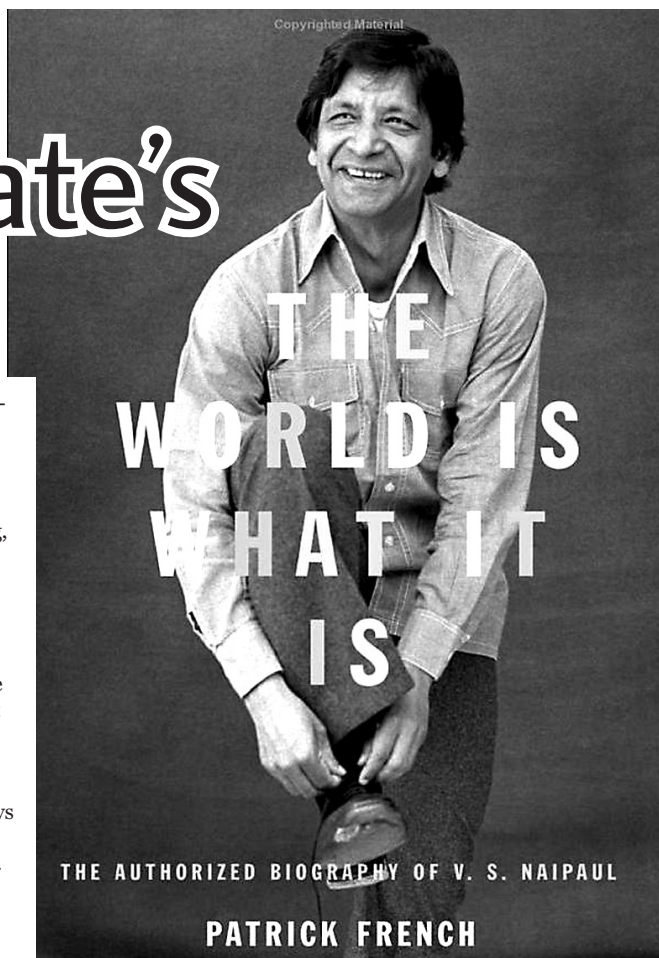
In one of his talks with his editor, he said, "I am having carnal pleasure for the first time in my life, are you saying I must give it up?" Naipaul was violent towards her and degraded her in bed. He told French, "I was very violent with her for two days with my hand; my hand began to hurt. She didn't mind it at all. She thought of it in terms of my passion for her."

Their liaison opened up the most productive period in his literary career in the 1970s, which culminated in his release of *A Bend in the River* in 1979.

When Patricia learned of her husband's affair with Gooding, she began to keep a diary he never knew about. In French's view, the diary put Patricia on a par with other great tragic literary spouses such as Sonia Tolstoy, Jane Carlyle and Leonard Woolf. When he revealed the affair to Patricia, Pat "was so good; she tried to comfort me ... I was so full of grief myself that in a way I expected her to respond to my grief, and she did." Naipaul said, "I was liberated. She was destroyed."

"I killed her," he said.

After Patricia's death, Naipaul ended his affair with Gooding to marry Nadira Alvi, a divorced Pakistani journalist.

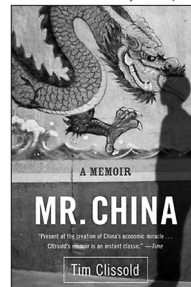


Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers.

Mr. China: A Memoir

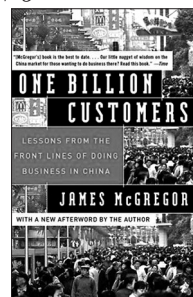
By Tim Clissold, 288pp, Collins Business, US\$14.95



It tells the rollicking story of a young man who goes to China with the misguided notion that he will help bring the Chinese into the modern world, only to be schooled by the most resourceful and creative operators he would ever meet. Part memoir, part parable, it is one man's coming-of-age story where he learns to respect and admire the nation he sought to conquer.

One Billion Customers: Lessons from the Front Lines of Doing Business in China

By James McGregor, 352pp, Free Press, US\$15.00

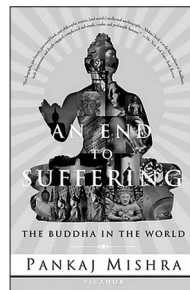


Companies from around the globe are flocking to

China to buy, sell, manufacture and create new products, but as former Wall Street Journal China bureau chief turned successful corporate executive James McGregor explains, business here is never quite what it seems. The book offers compelling narratives of personalities, business deals and lessons learned, creating pictures of the country's emergence as a global economic power with a dog-eat-dog business climate that has turned bureaucrats into billionaires and left many foreign business executives with their pockets turned inside out.

An End to Suffering: The Buddha in the World

By Pankaj Mishra, 432pp, Picador, US\$15.00



This book tells of Pankaj Mishra's search to understand Buddha's relevance in today's world, where religious violence, poverty and terrorism prevail. As he travels among Islamists and the emerging Hindu Muslim class in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Mishra explores the myths and places of the Buddha's life, the West's "discovery" of Buddhism and the religion's impact on modern politicians like Gandhi and Nelson Mandela.

(By He Jianwei)

Last Imperial eunuch's story told in English

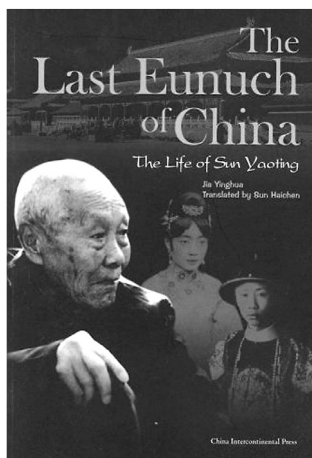
By Zhang Dongya

Qing history researcher Jia Yinghua's bestseller *The Last Eunuch of China: the Life of Sun Yaoting* (translated by Sun Hai-chen, 314pp, China Intercontinental Press, 92 yuan) was released in English in October.

Jia wrote the Chinese version in 1992 and revised it in 2004.

The author, 57, is a member of the Chinese Writers Association and vice-president of the Society of Chinese Biographers. Jia is widely acknowledged as the leading source of historical materials on late-Qing Dynasty figures such as the last emperor Puyi and the last eunuch Sun Yaoting.

He met Sun in the 1970s when he was working on his book, the *Second Half of the Last Emperor of China*. During Sun's last 20 years, Jia got several opportunities to meet and interview him. The recordings of their talks were hun-



dreds of hours long.

The biography features firsthand accounts of Sun's experiences, including his adventures in the Forbidden City, his reunion with Puyi in the 1930s and his return to "normal" life in a Buddhist temple.

Sun, who died in 1996 at the age of 94, served the last emperor and his empress Wanrong. "He was not just a eunuch, but a historical man who represented the unique history and culture of the end of Imperial China," Jia told *Beijing Today*.

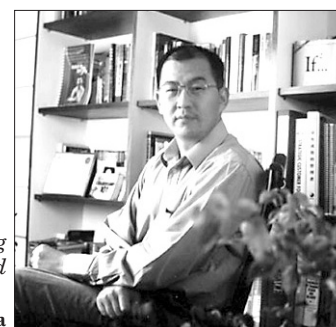
In the foreword, Sun wrote in his own handwriting that "over a long period of time, I disclosed to him (Jia), for the very first time, much of the secret lives of eunuchs ... though many people have written about me, this is the most reliable and best-researched book yet. It is a truthful history free of fabrications or farfetched conclusions."

The book has been serialized in 15 foreign languages in scores of magazines and newspapers. The Japanese version was a big success in 2007: its first run of 10,000 volumes sold out instantly and was reprinted seven times within the year.

International Freemen are the modern gypsies

Liu Keya, the marketing consultant who coined the name "IF."

Photo provided by Liu Keya



By Zheng Lu

A passport with pages full of stamps, things bought around the world and ready-to-go luggage are the feature of the IF, also called the "International Freeman," people with free will and the ability to live or work anywhere in the world.

Many work in the US but live in Italy and go to Brazil for holiday. The globalized lifestyle appeals to many, but being an IF may be tougher than it seems.

The proposer's definition

"This is a way of life that does not distinguish itself through external appearance, but through one's freedom to act," said Liu Keya, who first named the IFs. Liu, himself an IF, works as a marketing consultant in Beijing. "I could give up all I have here and start living anywhere else at any time," he said confidently.

It was not long after the country entered the WTO that Liu realized a new group of people who broke through geographical limitations had emerged. Liu said people around the world tend to be more free, so he chose the term "International Freeman."

From his observations and definition, IFs have strong survival abilities and the potential to make a lot of money.

Lin said a few years ago he met an Australian couple who lived in Zhuhai. The couple began with teaching English in China and got their language teaching license. Thus they stayed in Zhuhai and later opened a pizzeria.

"English and earning power are two legs that support the IF," Liu said. He said the former is a basic tool for communication, while the latter comes from "creating value to locals."

Liu admitted, however, that before he returned to China in 2000, he was not an IF in its true sense. Having studied overseas in the US, Liu entered Bristol-Myers Squibb and became a successful businessman. Although he could travel around for work, he realized he was not 100 percent free. He quit his job and returned to set up his own company.

Now he works two days per week and spends much of his time traveling.

"We should work to live: earning money is just a tool to support our lives," he said. A true IF can support himself in any environment, he said. Even if he moves to South America he will find market opportunities there or do business online.

"If you cannot duplicate your earning power in another place, you are not a real freeman yet," Liu said.

Choosing the IF life

Although IFs do not chase material possessions for vanity, the lifestyle by

necessity requires a steady financial basis. Travel expenses and visa applications are common problems with to deal.

Like Liu, Guo Yong, a venture capitalist at Omaha Capital China, was once an overseas student studying computer science at Syracuse University in the US. He started his career at a company in Massachusetts, becoming its second Chinese employee. After many years of hard work, he accumulated wealth and experience. He came back to China to seek new opportunities in 2003 after living abroad for 15 years.

He is an "International Flyman" to some extent, as his whole family is in the US.

He said he was confused by the need to say "Coming back to America" and "Coming back to China" at the same time. For vacation, he brings his family to see other countries two or three times a year.

He loves to say "the world is flat." The lifestyle of an IF melts away many of the boundaries between countries, and life quickly loses the feeling of "being abroad."

"I don't go abroad to go abroad, but for definite things such as golf and skiing," he said. He just came from Hokkaido, Japan, where he decided to go at once after watching *If You Are the One* last December.

Guo said to be so free is only possible because of modern policies. He said he, like many of his friends, came back to find China was "totally different from 20 years ago." The country is now an anchor in their IF lives.

Aside from the chance offered by the times, others pointed out the lifestyle has a relationship with one's own experiences.

Chai Liang, a famous violinist and teacher at the Central Conservatory of Music, went to Los Angeles to study music in the early 1990s. After graduation, he studied and later taught in the Julliard School of Music.

As a musician, he traveled many places to perform every year. "I have been to five continents," he said. The experience taught him how to deal with different people in different places. He developed multiple faces: violinist, teacher and philanthropist.

Chai said that the ability for him to do so many things comes from his early experience and education. He recalled that during his life overseas, he moved some 15 times after college. Everywhere he went people helped him to quickly adapt to the new environment.

No need to be elite

Though the standards for calling oneself an "IF" seem high, Liu said they are not absolutely out of the reach of an average person. The essence of the lifestyle lies more in spirit than physically moving around.

"IF represents freedom, but it does not mean having to fly here and there all the time. What the IF owns is the right to freedom," and the freedom to choose when to exercise it. "You can go to Japan today and Korea tomorrow, but you don't have to go," Liu said. What matters the most is that the IF has global vision and the ability to communication.

Earning lots of money does not directly correlate with living the IF life either, Liu said. "Many general managers at big corporations can hardly be an IF," he said. They have the basic material needs covered, but lack the freedom to abandon their high-paying jobs. Money is not what IF life is about: "It is about the freedom of our mind," Guo said. He did not consider the number

I have met, 90 percent are living to work," Liu said. Many people are tied to their work for psychological reasons. "The Chinese people have not made a habit of encouraging freedom and independence," he said: people fear losing things they already have.

Gradual changes for the IF

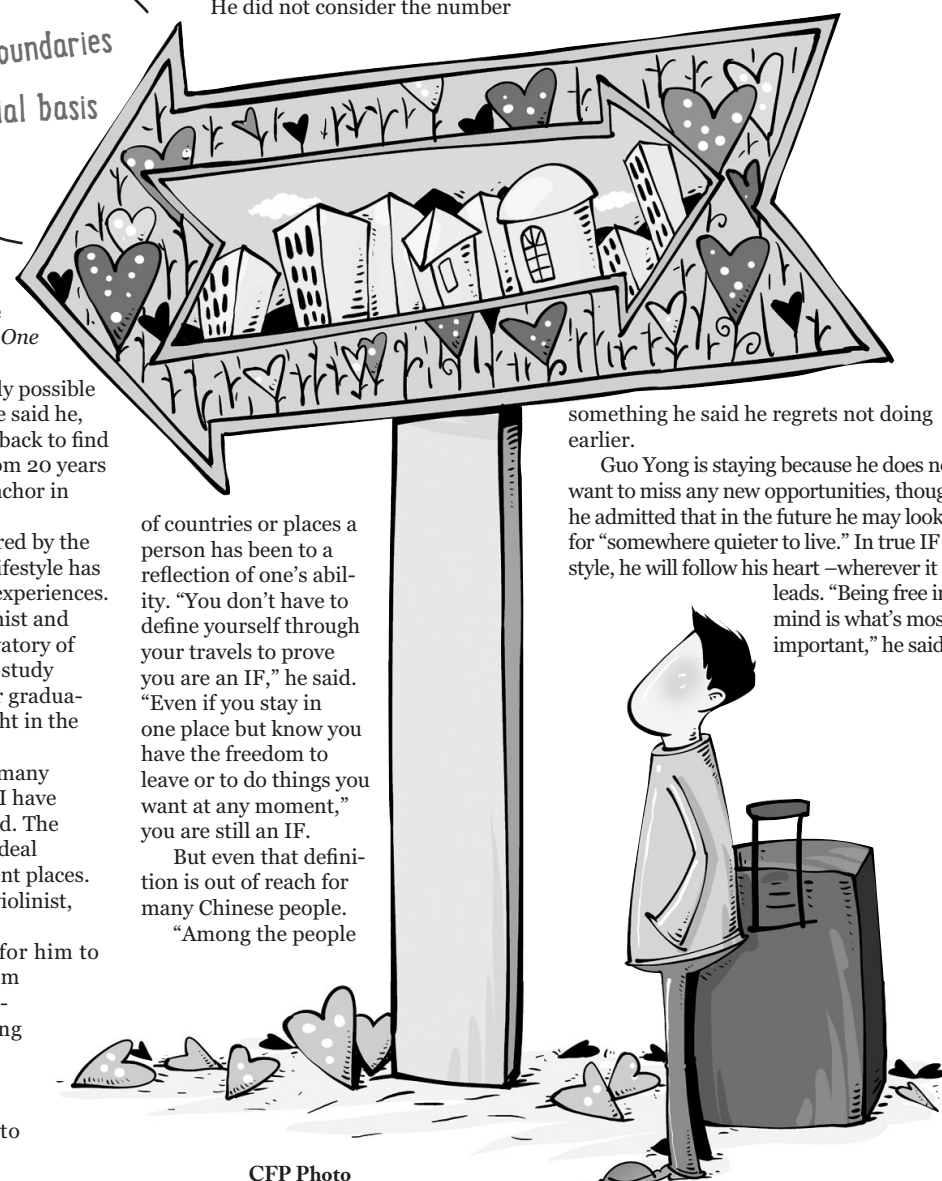
"I thought if I was tired of traveling around I could still deal with it," Chai Liang said. Following his heart, he loves the life of a teacher most.

"Being a teacher brought me the greatest sense of achievement," Chai said. Seeing his students playing music was most gratifying. He said teaching children to play music was more satisfying than traveling the world for years as a performer.

Another reason for the artist to stay in one place is to spend time with his family,

something he said he regrets not doing earlier.

Guo Yong is staying because he does not want to miss any new opportunities, though he admitted that in the future he may look for "somewhere quieter to live." In true IF style, he will follow his heart—wherever it leads. "Being free in mind is what's most important," he said.



CFP Photo

Free spirit
Independence
Follow your heart
Ready to go

Go vintage for a new look

By Wang Yu

Most parents do not understand why their kids are willing to pay more than 300 yuan for a used jacket or a second-hand silk printed shirt from the 1970s. But young people – students, writers, photographers and rockers – see these clothes that are older than they are as treasures.

Clothing made before the 1920s is referred to as antique clothing and those made from the 1920s to 1980s are called vintage. The demand for vintage clothing has increased dramatically since the early 1990s. One reason for its comeback is the influence of such celebrities as Julia Roberts and Kate Moss who wear vintage in movies, shows or just on a day out in town.

Environmentalists are giving a thumbs-up to this trend for its environmental-friendliness: reusing and repairing old things rather than throwing them away. But not all old clothing qualifies as fashionable. What shoppers need to keep in mind are the following keywords: uniqueness, design, material and craftsmanship.

In China, second-hand fashion only became trendy after the new millennium. Youngsters describe vintage clothing as *guzhuo*, which is borrowed from the Japanese word “fulugi”. Vintage-clothing lovers have since formed a subculture in metropolises, with imported items coming through port cities like Tianjin and Shenzhen.

Rock and rollers became pioneers of this fashion. “We were searching for a style which would make us look unique. As a fan of British rock bands such as The Clash and Franz Ferdinand, I also wanted to feel close to them by imitating their appearance,” said Liu, the lead vocalist of his rock band Linga.

Though his business has running for only a month, Liu is considered an expert in the field. “I was introduced to vintage clothing in 2002 when many of my friends began wearing old but well-designed clothes,” he said.

For those who want to hunt down vintage clothing, *Beijing Today* provides you with a list of shops to get you started.



The Outer Space

Owner Lu Bin used to have a shop on Gulou Dong Dajie, but closed it recently. A photographer, band player and illustrator, Lu is also an expert at vintage clothing and can tell the age of a leather jacket from its design. Most of the clothes he sells online were manufactured in the 1970s.

“Those who choose vintage clothing also consciously choose to move away from the mainstream. To me, it is also a way of challenging the consumerism of society,” Lu said.

Web site: shop35473864.taobao.com

Photo provided by The Outer Space



Mega Mega Vintage

The shop is well-decorated and has a “London feel” to it. Customers will easily spot its red-lit sign on the shop front. The store walls are painted blue and covered with posters of art works and pictures of The Clash, a British rock band. Besides vintage clothing, Mega Mega also sells gramophone players and records.

“I designed the place myself after looking at pictures of foreign vintage stores on the Internet,” Liu said. “I hope customers come in not only to buy clothes, but also to experience a different atmosphere and to get into a different culture.” The shop’s fitting room looks like a London public phone booth.

Most of Mega Mega’s vintage clothing are imported from Korea, Japan and Thailand. “I have some friends abroad who help look for rare stuff. But most of the goods in the shop are selected from tons of imported used clothes. Then they are disinfected, ironed and classified. That’s tough work to do,” Liu said.

Vintage leather jackets, coats, boots and sweaters are available at affordable prices.

Where: 241 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 8 pm

Tel: 8404 5637



The Old Town Girls

All the garments in the shop are for women, not a surprise given its name. It is not big, but offers everything a modern young lady needs: its products are as varied as artificial fur coats and short boots with edging. Rockabillys, hippies and disco lovers will find something here in their style.

Where: 97-2 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 8 pm

Tel: 158 1087 7852



Underground Kidz

This is another shop that is run by rockers. Liu Hao, the bassist of Joyside, and his band members opened it as a gathering place for friends, and as a venue for their once-a-month parties.

Leather jackets and vintage jeans are Underground Kidz’s specialties. It also offers vintage foreign military coats.

Where: 69-2 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 2:30-10 pm

Tel: 8401 2346

Photos by Song Nannan

Cured ham, stunner on the table

By Venus Lee

What is the "stunner" on your dining table? Different people have different answers. But have you ever seen the movie *Jamon Iberico* by Spanish director Pedro Almodovar? Some film goers said the ham was an aphrodisiac in the movie. Although we do not know if this is true or not, the right ham can make an ordinary meal a feast. Different types of ham are available in Beijing, a good way to start off the new Lunar Year.



Melon with Iberico ham, 68 yuan

Spanish Ham

Ham is a historically important food; for centuries, it has been dried and cured with salt. When it comes to ham, Spanish ham has a more natural taste compared with its delicate-tasting French and Italian counterparts.

There are two basic types of cured ham in Spain: Jamon Serrano or "mountain ham" and Jamon Iberico or "Iberian ham." The former is ordinary ham, which is made from several breeds of white pigs, such as Duroc, Landrace or Large White. The hogs are mainly fed cereal and the meat is cured for 7 to 16 months. Jamon Iberico is top-class ham, made only from Iberian pigs, whose breeding is restricted to an area in southwestern Spain and southeastern Portugal. Besides being fed cereal, these pigs roam the countryside and eat acorns, so their fat is primrose yellow and the meat has a nutty smell. The curing process lasts 14 to 36 months.

Curing has to be coordinated with the change in seasons. Spanish ham is cured with the hoof and bone together. It is soaked in sea salt in a cool, well-ventilated chamber. The salting period should be just right to ensure that the ham is not dehydrated, in order to preserve certain waters and protein. During the curing period, neither fume smoking nor flavoring matters as the sea salt should be the only additive. With the rise in

temperature, the fat begins to melt and the meat becomes fragrant – the time when the ham begins to ripen.

The longer it is preserved, the softer and more fragrant the meat becomes. But if preservation exceeds three years, the ham's quality begins to decline. Only Iberian ham is flavorful enough to be eaten without any side dishes. Choose a bottle of wine to complement the dish.

Mare, a Spanish restaurant, offers Spanish ham wrapped in honeydew melon. The fruit's sweetness goes well with the cured meat.

Mare Restaurant

Where: Tower 1, 12 Guanghua Lu Bing, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6595 4178



Photos provided by Mare

Italian Ham

Italy's Prosciutto di parma or Parma Ham is probably the most famous ham in the world. Its history goes back 2,000 years. The environmental, ecological and climatic conditions of the area where it is produced provide the key to how this culinary delight developed. To maintain its quality, Parma Ham is under the protection of the EU Common Agricultural Policy and is ensured under the group's Protected Designation of Origin (POD).

Authentic Parma Ham is made from Large White, Landrace and Duroc pigs, raised in northern Italy. The hogs must be raised over nine months to a weight of at least 150 kilograms. They are fed with the leavings of Parmigiano or Parmesan Cheese, so the ham eventually acquires a very distinctive taste.

The process of making Parma Ham can take 9 to 18 months, depending on the size of the ham. First the pork is cleaned, salted and then left for about two

months. During this period, the meat is gradually pressed and carefully drained of leftover blood to avoid breaking the bone. In contrast to Spanish ham, Parma Ham is coated not only with salt but lard, rice flour and pepper. Italians add these to the hind legs in order to prevent the meat from hardening, and to keep insects away. When the pork has been properly cured, it is washed several times to remove the salt and other ingredients, and hung in an airy, shaded place.

Italian ham can be served many ways. It is often used in sandwiches, sometimes in a variation on the Caprese Salad, with basil, tomato, fruits and fresh mozzarella cheese. In Cepe restaurant, the Parma Ham is served with cheese salad and peach, which makes a good antipasto.

Cepe Restaurant

Where: 1/F, Ritzcarlton Hotel, 18 Jinrong Jie, Xicheng District

Tel: 6601 6666 -6288



Photos provided by Cepe Selection of mixed appetizers, 150 yuan



Portuguese smoked ham, 130 yuan



Portuguese Ham

Portuguese ham is hard to find because even Portuguese restaurants sell Spanish ham. Although Portuguese Ham is not as well-known as Spanish Ham, Pata Negra, a type of smoked ham is also delicious.

Pata Negra or "black pig" is an Iberian breed that primarily lives in the south and southwest parts of the Iberian Peninsula, especially in southeastern Portugal. This dark-skinned animal is the only breed of pigs that prefers to eat acorns. Immediately after weaning, the piglets are fattened on barley and maize for several weeks. The pigs are then allowed to roam the pasture and oak groves to feed on grass, herbs, acorns and roots. Nearer to slaughtering, their diets may be strictly limited to acorns for the best quality ham.

The meat is smoked using different types of wood that give it unique flavor. After smoking for four days to one week, the hind leg will be salted for one to two months, and then hung in an airy place.

Pata Negra Ham is prized both for its smooth texture and rich savoury taste. A good ham has regular flecks of intramuscular fat.

Portuguese Ham is only available in town at Camoes Portuguese Restaurant. It is one of its most popular signature starters. The ham is best served with cheese, fruit and bread, but it can also be used as an ingredient for soups.

Camoes Portuguese Restaurant

Where: 1/F, Legendale Hotel, 90-92 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 8511 3388

Photos provided by Camoes Portuguese Restaurant

Rhinoceros in love again

By Gan Tian

Experimental play director Meng Jinghui brings back to the stage his masterpiece *Rhinoceros in Love* to mark its 10th anniversary.

The play tells the love story of Mingming, a girl full of secrets, who changes the life of a man named Ma Lu the moment he sees her. But Mingming has a heart of stone and is indifferent to Ma's wooing. Desperate to win over Mingming, Ma accepts the help of a salesman, Toothbrush, who finds two young women to fawn over Ma in an attempt to make Mingming jealous. Because of Ma's madness, however, the plan fails. So one night, Ma, exhibiting the stubbornness of a rhinoceros, kidnaps Mingming in the name of love.

Rhinoceros in Love, created in 1999, discusses the true meaning of love in present times. The play, which heralded the prosperity of experimental theater in Beijing, is regarded by some young people as the "Bible of Love." When people get frustrated with the workings of the relationship between men and women, *Rhinoceros* serves as chicken soup, reawakening idealism.

The 2009 version of *Rhinoceros* features a fresh lineup of actors, and stronger visuals than the three previous versions, Meng, the director, said. Its 240th performance will be held at the National Center for the Performing Arts to celebrate this year's Valentine's Day. Ten years after its release, the play is also staged at Honey Comb, Meng's own theater.

Rhinoceros in Love

Where: Drama Hall, National Center for the Performing Arts

When: February 12-21, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

6

Saturday, February 7

Exhibition

2025 Project – Wu Xiaojun Solo Exhibition

Where: Magician Space, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 15, daily except Monday, 10:30 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9635, 8709 3557

PIN – Videotheque Artists' Group Exhibition

This is the gallery's first show for 2009, an extension of its Videotheque project launched in September.

Where: ShanghART Beijing, 261 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 22, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 3202

Movie

A Good Marriage

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 5 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

Seventeen Years

The film, which came out in 1999, was directed by indie films director Zhang Yuan.

Where: Yufeng Bookstore, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 62701 9288

Upcoming

Nightlife

Symphony X

Who: Symphony X

Where: The Star Live, 3/F, 79 Hepingli Xijie, Dongcheng District

When: February 13, 8:00 pm

Admission: Area A 480; Area B 280; Area C 480; VIP 680

Tel: 6425 5677

5 Friday, February 6

Exhibition

2009 New Year Print Art Festival

Where: Amelie Art Gallery (between Red Gate and White Space

Gallery), 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 6, daily except Monday, 11 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6530 7048

Silent Music Touching Soul – Chinese Abstract Art

Abstract art, an artistic revolution in the West, entered the country in the 1980s. The exhibition presents the works of four Chinese abstract artists: Bo Yun, Cheng Xiangjun, Mao Lizi and Zhang Jianbo. Their pieces combine traditional philosophy with Western modernity.

Where: Dandeli Gallery, 3 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 10, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Tel: 6770 8966

Movie

My Night at Maudis

Where: French Culture Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 5 pm

Admission: 10-20 yuan

Tel: 6553 2627

Nightlife

Milonga La Portena

Enjoy the sensuality and rhythm of Argentine Tango at this tango dance party.

Where: Hidden Dreams, 3 Zhangzi Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 pm – 2 am

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6403 0688

Retrodance

The Retrodance crew is back for the Old School Dance Party Volume 5.

Where: Club Obiwan, 4 Xihai Xiyan, Xicheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 20 yuan (includes a mug of beer)

Tel: 6617 3231

7

Sunday, February 9

Exhibition

New York Photographs 1983-1993 – Ai Weiwei

Solo Exhibition

This exhibition presents the artist's unpublished photographs, chosen from a collection of over 10,000 photos that capture the history, culture and atmosphere of 1980s New York.

Where: Three Shadows Photography Art Centre, 155 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 18, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm,

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 2663 ext 8008

The Rosy Clouds in the Sky

The works, by distinguished contemporary painters, portray the lives of various minority groups such as Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Dai, Mongolian and Yi. This is part of the museum's permanent collection.

Where: National Art Museum of China, 1 Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until February 21, daily 9

am – 5 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 6400 6326

Still / Moving – Pierre Siedel

Solo Exhibition

In this series of photographs, Pierre Siedel captures the expressions of strangers he comes across in the long corridors of Beijing's subway stations.

Where: Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery II, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 19, daily 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9263

Nightlife

MAMA Funker

With a Brazilian on guitar and vocals, a Cuban guitarist, a Chinese drummer and a Dominican bass player, the band breaks down the performance venue and leaves the crowd wanting more.

Where: Mao Live, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 10:30 pm

Tel: 6402 5080

Stage in March

Concert

Israeli Jazz Pianist Yaron Herman Recital

Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: March 1, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Vienna Philharmonic Concert

Who: Conducted by Zubin Mehta
Where: National Grand Theater Concert Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 8-9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

China Philharmonic Orchestra 2008-2009 Music Festival

Who: Conducted by Okko Kamu
Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: March 13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Sarah Brightman World Tour 2009

Where: Capital Gymnasium, 54 Zhongguancun Nan Dajie, Haidian District

When: March 22, 7:30 pm

Admission: 380-2,000 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

China Philharmonic Orchestra 2008-2009 Music Festival

Who: Conducted by Jin Wang
Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: March 28, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

Alexander Paley Piano Recital

Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: March 29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Dance

Oncin

Who: China National Ballet

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 1, 7:30 pm

Admission: 120-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Mei Lanfang

Who: The Guangzhou Ballet

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 6-8, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Raise the Red Lantern

Who: China National Ballet

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 14-15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-600 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

A Handful of Wild Jujubes

Who: Directed by Zhang Jigang

Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: March 10-12, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By Li Jing)

When 'sexy' clashes with 'safety'



By Han Manman

For some young people, wearing tight clothes is an important part of looking fashionable, sexy and slim. They like tight clothes, especially in winter to show their figure. But doctors say that pursuit of fashion may be harmful to one's health.

The dangers of wearing tight jeans

Tight jeans are always popular with fashionable people. To ensure their jeans perfectly conform to their curves, many girls choose pants much smaller than their actual size.

However, doctors warned that tight pants can squeeze sensory nerve under the hip bones, causing a tingling, burning sensation called paresthesia.

Tight and "low-rise" trousers should not be worn by "heavy women," and doctors suggest that women return to wearing traditional high-waist jeans or loose dresses.

"Long-term wearing of tight, low-rise jeans will squeeze waist fat into a gourd shape that is bad for circulation. It can easily lead to chronic lumbar muscle strain and will disrupt stomach function by excess pressure and oxygen supply," Doctor Chen Xian from the China-Japan Friendship Hospital said.

Tight ties could damage eyesight

Wearing your tie too tight could put you at increased risk of blindness, according to researchers from the New

York Eye and Ear Infirmary in New York.

The researchers measured the pressure of the fluid in the eyeball in a small group of men before and after they attached their tie.

From the research, they found a significant rise, a condition that has been linked to glaucoma.

The men's "intraocular pressure" was measured, then they were asked to put on a "slightly uncomfortable" tie for three minutes.

When tested again, 70 percent of them were found to have significant rises in pressure. As soon as the ties were removed, the pressure fell.

Avoiding tight underwear

Tight underwear should be avoided if people want to have a more comfortable life, Chen said.

For women:

Chen said many women wear tight underwear during their menstrual flow to prevent embarrassing leaks and ease pain. However, scientifically speaking,

loose-fitting underwear would be a better choice.

She said many gynecological problems, including infertility, can be caused by wearing tight underwear, Chen said.

Fungal vaginitis is another disease caused by wearing tight underwear. Chen said that during the menstrual

period, if there is not a way for the blood to seep out, then the vagina can become a breeding ground for a number of microorganisms. The result can be a fungal inflammation, which if left untreated may turn into a broader pelvic infection.

For men:

Wearing underwear that is too tight may lower a man's sperm count. The testes produce sperm only if they are at temperatures a few degrees below the temperature of the body. The scrotum holds the testes away from the body to maintain this cooler temperature. Higher temperatures close to the body may occur from wearing tight underwear.

Sore throat relief at home

By Han Manman

When winter starts to become spring, the dry air can take its toll on people's throats.

About 70 to 80 percent of Chinese people have chronic pharyngitis, an inflammation of the back of the throat, said Zheng Ronghua, a doctor in the Ophthalmology and Otorhinolaryngology Department at Longhua Hospital.

"It is not that people suddenly get pharyngitis in winter," Zheng said. "In most cases, they already have this condition without knowing it, and it relapses easily in the cold, dry weather."

Zheng says many other factors can also contribute to a raw throat that makes swallowing painful. Spicy and fried foods can irritate the throat. Speaking loudly for long periods, moving between rooms with a sharp difference in temperature and fatigue can also lead to an itchy and scratchy feeling.

The doctor recommends staying warm and avoiding contact with sick people. The common cold can exacerbate a sore throat. Use a humidifier if you have one, or put a basin of water in an air-conditioned room to help relieve damage caused by dry air.

Zheng advises against clearing one's throat too often. Though it may provide temporary relief from itchiness and pain, it will hurt your vocal cords and make your voice even rustier. Drinking warm water is the best way to clear the throat.

She said a good diet and lifestyle also help to maintain a healthy throat. She suggests people who suffer from throat pain in the winter eat pears. Pears will help nourish yin energy, which is deficient in people with pharyngitis. Other foods good for the throat are soy milk, turnips, lotus roots, chufa and honey.

Another effective remedy is chewing American ginseng slices. It can relieve an itchy throat and nourishes the yin at the same time.

She also suggests patients drink chrysanthemum tea, though that remedy may be better during summer time. Chinese medicine considers the tea too "cold," and likely to damage the digestive system in winter.

"An inflamed throat is usually caused by pathogenic internal heat which may be due to dry weather, fatigue, a bad mood and irritating foods. Good rest is also very important for people with throat pain," Zheng said.



CFP Photos

Around Chengdu a year after the quake

By Jackie Zhang

The magnitude-8 earthquake that struck Wenchuan County, Sichuan Province last May seriously damaged many areas around the locality. These include the provincial capital Chengdu and cities under its administration like Dujiangyan, Pengzhou, Chongzhou and Dayi.

These places are popular among tourists because of their natural scenery, history and culture. After months of reconstruction following the deadly tremor, the Chengdu Reconstruction Office and the Tourism Bureau of Chengdu opened four routes to visitors who wish to travel around Chengdu and its neighboring cities.



Ruins in Shangshuyuan, Bailu Town

Foreword from the tourism bureau

It's a new beginning to open the routes to the public. We've done much reconstruction work after the earthquake. People who lost their houses have resettled in new homes. It's time to start welcoming back tourists, which can help the tourism industry in and around Chengdu recover, and improve the local economy and lives.

Cities including Chengdu, Dujiangyan, Pengzhou, Chongzhou and Dayi, located on a plain, are safer because there is less chance of aftershocks. In springtime, these areas have beautiful scenery.

The facilities in these cities, however, still need to be improved. We suggest that visitors bring a car to see the sights. The roads and expressway system there have been rebuilt, and are safe and convenient. Tourists can stay overnight in towns, but it is better for them to lodge in Chengdu where there are many more comfortable hotels. It is easy to drive from Chengdu to any of the other four cities through expressways.

— De Zujian, vice director of marketing, Tourism Bureau of Chengdu

Pengzhou

Danjingshan Town →
Xinxing Town → Tongji Town → Bailu Town

From Chengdu, people can drive to the city of Pengzhou through the Chengpeng Expressway. On the way, they will pass Dajian Lu, Danjingshan Town, Tongji Town, Bailu Town and many other communities where victims of the earthquake have resettled.

Bailu, which has 17 Buddhist and Taoist temples, was one of the areas most badly damaged by the quake. In the late-Qing Dynasty

(1636-1912), Catholic missionaries from France came and built many churches of which Shangshuyuan and Xiashuyuan are the most important. Unfortunately, these historical structures were destroyed in the quake and only ruins can be seen. The broken Zhongfa Bridge and the remains of a local primary school may also be visited.

In Xiaoyudong, visitors can see how the town's bridge was almost turned over by the intensity of the tremor. The way the bridge is angled

shows the direction of the seismic waves.

There are also places worth seeing in Pengzhou City. There is the Longxing Temple, which is 1,670 years old and famed for its Sakyamuni Sheli Pagoda, a repository of Buddhist relics. The temple also contains a jade Buddha from the King of Burma, and the Buddhist Tipitaka or scriptures, presented by the Japanese government.



Dujiangyan reopened to tourists last September.

CFP Photos



Architectural relics in Bailu Town

Dujiangyan

Yutang Town →
Zhongxing Town →
Qingchengshan Town →
Anlong Town

Dujiangyan was one of the cities nearest the epicenter of the Wenchuan Earthquake. The city was turned upside-down by the quake, but its tourism industry has gradually recovered following reconstruction efforts.

Dujiangyan is known for a big water conservation project undertaken in 256 BC. The system, which is still in use and irrigates 5,300 square kilometers of agricultural land in the region, attracts hordes of visitors.

Qingchengshan Town is the highlight of this four-town route. Qingcheng Mountain, regarded as one of the birthplaces of Taoism, contains dozens of well-preserved temples that house cultural relics. Three of the major temples are Jianfugong, Shangqinggong and Tianshidong. Tianshidong, the biggest on the mountain, is one of Sichuan's main Taoist temples and the headquarters of the Qingchengshan Taoism Association. Shangqinggong is located at the mountain's peak.

The preparation of food in the temples is influenced by Taoist philosophy, which stresses the preservation of health. Taoists favor fruits like Chinese chestnuts and ginkgoes, which go into dishes like Bruised Chicken with Ginkgoes. Pot herbs are also a favorite.

Visitors can stay overnight on the mountain. Lodging houses charge between 100 and 150 yuan per person a night. But nothing beats living in one of the temples, which cost 20 to 30 yuan per person a night.

Continued on page 21...



The main architecture of Shangshuyuan church was seriously damaged in the earthquake.

... continued from page 20

Yuantong Town
CFP Photo

Chongzhou

Jinjiangxiang → Yuantong Town → Jiezi Town → Sanlang Town → Huaiyuan Town → Wenjingjiang Town → Jiguanshanxiang

Chongzhou City, which is 2,200 years old, was called Shuzhou in ancient times. Jiulonggou is famous for its nine ravines that look like nine dragons. People who climb to the highest peak of the rhododendra-covered Longmen Mountains can have a great view of sunrise and will see a sea of clouds before them.

Jiezi Town is northwest of downtown Chongzhou and lies against Qingcheng Mountain. The town contains 32 temples, with Guangyan Chanyuan at the center. Jiezi's architecture is quite old. Although some of the buildings have been renovated by the locals, the basic structures have been preserved. Incorporating foreign influences during the late Qing Dynasty, most structures have Gothic decor instead of traditional carvings.

Tanggongci, located on the northern part of Jiangcheng Jie, was built as a site for memorizing poems by Tang-Dynasty (618-907) poet Tang Qiu. Next to it is Chaoyangsi Ziku, western Sichuan's only preserved ziku, a kind of pagoda, built in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Beside the ziku are four ginkgos that are hundreds of years old.

The Fengqishan Mountain Resort, a large area of virgin forest, pagodas and ancient streets, is also a good place to drop by while in Jiezi.

Yuantong, one of Chongzhou's four biggest towns, goes back 1,600 years. Yongli Bridge, Luoshi Gongguan, Huangshi Citang, Yuantong Catholic Church and Tiegian Bridge are good spots to visit. The town has over 30 ancient trees, including evergreens, ginkgos and cypresses.



Travel notes behind the wheel:

Chengdu can easily be reached by plane or train. Visitors can travel to different parts of Chengdu using the Chengqing Expressway. Dujiangyan and Chongzhou may be reached via this route. The Cheng-peng Expressway is for travelers heading from Chengdu to Pengzhou. People driving to Dayi from Chengdu should take the Chengwenqiong Expressway. From Dujiangyan, there is also an expressway to Xiling Xue Mountain.



Xiling Xueshan Ski Resort

Dayi County

Wangsi Town → Xinchang Town → Huashuiwan Town → Xiling Town → Wushanxiang → Hemingxiang → Yuelai Town

Like many places on the four routes, Dayi County is another that has Taoism and Buddhist-related attractions.

Wuzhong Mountain, located on the northwest of Dayi, was a popular Buddhist center in ancient times. It was one of the origins of Buddhism in China: In 73 AD, two Indian monks built the Puzhao temple on the mountain, six years after the establishment of the Baima temple in Henan Province, the first Buddhist temple in the country.

Xiling Xue Mountain in Xiling Town is the highest peak in Chengdu. At 5,364 meters high, parts of it are perennially covered in snow. It is located on the same latitude as Switzerland's Alps, so its snow season and quality are also similar. This has also earned it the nickname "Alps in the East."

People often call Xiling Xueshan as the Alps of the east. The mountain's attractions include virgin forests, rare plants and animals and waterfalls.

The Xiling Xueshan Ski Resort is the biggest of its kind in the country, and includes an amusement park. The snow there is thickest between December and March every year, about 60 centimeters.

At the foot of the mountain is the Huashuiwan Hot Spring Resort. After some exhausting downhill skiing, visitors can head here for some rest and relaxation.

Jiezi Town CFP Photo

Positive Language



By Morry Morgan

Don't think of a blue dog. Really! don't think of a blue dog. What ever you do, DO NOT think of a blue dog. Now, what are you thinking about? Chances are, you are thinking of a blue dog, right? But I said do not think of a blue dog. So why did you think of a blue dog? This is because you can't control your unconscious mind. It is influenced by words, sounds, smells and images, which in turn, affect stored memories and their connected feelings.

Think about the last time you heard a song from your teenage years. Does that song recall memories of crushes, heart-break, rebellion or freedom? Do images of specific places or people appear in your head? If so, you have tapped into your unconscious mind.

I was reminded of the power of the unconscious mind back in 1999, when I first traveled across China. It was January, and I found myself in Tiananmen Square in central Beijing with my friend Stuart. Standing in front of the portrait of Mao Zedong, I surveyed the area. Thousands of Chinese, mostly tourists were milling around in groups, taking photos of each other, with the Great Leader in the background. One couple caught my eye. An old peasant man, probably in his 70s, was standing with a toddler. The two reminded me of the massive changes China had made in the last 50 years. There stood an old Red Guard, and a New Emperor.

I pulled out my camera, and as my finger pressed down to snap a photo, the old man looked down to the toddler.

"Mei you!" he said gruffly, indicating that he 'did not have' what the toddler was asking for. I assumed the toddler wanted candy.

At once, the boy began to cry. Two Chinese words had caused the young boy

you have cold ice tea?)

She looked at me for a second, and then, with her right arm pushed forward and waving back and forth said, "No! No!" Her face was neutral.

Looking back on the situation I understand what was going through this lady's mind. "There is a foreigner coming up to me now. I don't speak

"I am not suggesting that you never use negative language. However, overuse can cause people to attach unconscious feelings to you, which will damage your relationship, or goodwill."

to feel pain; not physical, but emotional. To the young boy, "mei you" is a negative word. Once said, it means that he is not able to have what he wants, and consequently this causes him to feel unhappy. Other words also cause him to feel unhappy. They are the Chinese language equivalent to "no," "impossible" and "can not." Words, are extremely powerful, to the unconscious mind, especially of a young child.

Fast forward six years later, to the summer of 2005, and I found myself searching for a cold drink in the streets of Shanghai. I found refuge from the humidity in the Hengshan Road subway station, where I also assumed I would find a small shop selling drinks and snacks. I was right. I spied a small stall near the ticket machine manned by a middle-aged woman. She looked at me as I approached.

"Dui buqi. You bing de bing hong cha, ma?" I said in Chinese (Excuse me. Do

English. Hang on, my daughter taught me some English words. Now, what do you suppose he wants?")

She used the word 'no' because she thought that, as a foreigner, I would understand, ignoring that fact that I used Chinese language to ask the question. What she didn't realize was the power that the two-letter word and the coordinated hand wave had on my unconscious mind.

Milliseconds after hearing, "No! No!" from the sales woman my back tensed. My eyebrows angled and my forehead creased. Most likely my blood pressure and heartbeat raised slightly. The result was a negative feeling running through my body. A few seconds later, my conscious mind took control as I reminded myself of the cultural differences, and the lady's lack of relationship with the word "no." For her, it was just a sound. She didn't link this noise to a scolding mother, angry teammate or a disap-

pointed teacher. The emotional, unconscious connection was absent.

The lesson from the toddler and the saleswoman are the same. We are all affected by negative language. It controls us, if only for a few seconds, or milliseconds. But even milliseconds are enough to recall negative feelings. What's worrying is that many of us still use negative language in the workplace, willy-nilly. When someone asks you whether you can finish a report by Wednesday, do you state bluntly, "No. That's impossible. It will take another two days" or do you say, "I can finish the report, and can give it to you on Friday"? Listen to yourself, or reread your email replies.

I am not suggesting that you never use negative language. However, overuse can cause people to attach unconscious feelings to you, which will damage your relationship, or goodwill. Think about your email inbox. Are there any names that you dread to see appear? Thomas, a Training specialist who works for a foreign car company in Beijing, told me that some of his local Chinese staff, do an about-face when they see one specific foreign engineer walking towards them in the corridor. This engineer has somehow managed to cause panic in his Chinese colleagues, so much so that their logical mind is overridden with the sight of a big, scary monster. That is the power of the unconscious mind.

Morry Morgan is the general manager of ClarkMorgan Corporate Training and author of Negotiating; with Chinese Characteristics. He has been in China for eight years and trains staff on how to negotiate for true win-win results.

Valentine's Day

A moment of love

Celebrate Valentine's Day at the Heavenly Spa by Westin. Enjoy two hours with that special someone in the renewal spa suite with a romantic bath, relaxing Chinese massage and two glasses of champagne.

Where: The Westin Beijing Financial Street, 9B Jinrong Jie, Xicheng District
When: before February 28

Cost: 1,000 yuan per couple (subject to a 15 percent service charge)
Tel: 6629 7878

Valentine's cake

The executive pastry chef of Shangri-La's Kerry Centre has created this exquisite treat covered in pink chocolate. Break into it to discover an irresistible surprise made from chocolate and molten strawberries, pink champagne and coconut. Every cake purchase comes with a raffle ticket to win a lavish Valentine's treat for two.

Where: Shangri-La Kerry Centre, 1 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District
Cost: 998 yuan nett
Tel: 65618833 ext 45

A perfect evening to seal your love

The evening starts with a six-course dinner and a glass of Perrier Jouet champagne to toast your love for each other. Following dinner, you are invited on a rejuvenating trip to the Heavenly Spa for a 50-minute massage and another glass of Perrier Jouet champagne for you and your love.

Where: The Westin Beijing Chaoyang, 1 Xinyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District
When: February 14
Cost: 1,288 yuan for dinner and massage, 888 yuan for dinner only (subject to 15 percent surcharge)
Tel: 5922 8880



Aria by night

Spoil your sweetheart by splurging on a swanky Valentine's night at Aria that's guaranteed to make her swoon: a casually elegant setting with a romantic, candle-lit atmosphere, soft, seductive background music, a bottle of champagne and fragrant roses on the table all form the perfect backdrop for Chef de Cuisine Bernhard Lermann's exquisitely crafted five-course gourmet dinner.

Where: Aria, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Cost: 1,288 yuan nett (including bottle of champagne)
Tel: 6505 2266 ext 36 or 6505 5838

Grand Valentine's Day

Enjoy the intimate atmosphere, smooth rhythm and gourmet cuisine with your loved one. The exquisite buffet at CBD International Cuisines is priced 536 yuan

Valentine's Day, Spanish Style

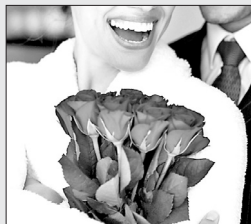
Treat your loved one and enjoy a romantic moment with a Spanish tapas buffet spread including a premium selection of seafood, paella and gazpacho with a fresh twist – the especially delightful tapas by chef Joaquin Campos. The memorable cuisine, unforgettable ambience and romantic gifts will make it a night to remember forever.

Where: Cafe Swiss, Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: February 14, 6-10 pm
Cost: 688 yuan net per person
Tel: 6553 2288

French romance

Immerse yourself in French romance this Valentine's Day at Sofitel Wanda Beijing. The exquisite five-course dinner includes two appetizers, L'huitre and La Saint Jacques; two main courses, Le Foie Gras De Canard and Le Homard; and one popular dessert, Le Fruit De La Passion served with a glass of Champagne Rose.

Where: Le Pre Lenotre, Sofitel Wanda Beijing, Tower C, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District
Cost: 1,600 yuan per couple
Tel: 8599 6666 ext 6528



Where: Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6530 9383

Italian night

Celebrate Valentine's Day at Da Giorgio in style. The special set menu for two featuring fine Italian cuisine and a glass of Moet and Chandon for each diner. An intimate ambience completes this romantic experience with taste and elegance. Ladies will also receive delectable chocolates and a rose as a memorable gift.

Where: Da Giorgio, Grand Hyatt Beijing, Beijing Oriental Plaza, 1 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

Cost: 2,188 yuan per couple (subject to 15 percent surcharge)
Tel: 8518 1234

Valentine's Day Romantic Weekend

Experience an unimaginably intimate Valentine's Day at the Hilton Beijing Wangfujing and realize your ultimate romantic escapades with an array of heart-filled moments during this Valentine's Day weekend. Cherish an overnight stay in a Deluxe Room and pamper each other with Cupid's recommendations. Arose bath can be prepared in the privacy of your own room, and a bottle of red wine and a platter of heart-shaped chocolates can help set the mood. Enjoy a candle-lit dinner at either Vasco's or Chynna and keep the celebrations going through the morning with a sumptuous breakfast.

Where: Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 13-15
Cost: from 1,599 yuan
Tel: 5812 8888

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Gan Tian at gantian@ynet.com.

How old am I at the outside?



Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. A man surfs online instead of waiting in his car during the rush hour.

Nothing is wrong with the structure of this sentence. However, it is not English; it is not the way native speakers would express the same idea. The problem lies in its linguistic sense: The reader will wonder why the person would be "waiting in his car during the rush hour." If you say "waiting in his car during a traffic jam," the idea will be much clearer. If you say "sitting idle in his car during a prolonged traffic jam," it will be even better.

2. Small enterprises have no funds with which to pay insurance.

The problem with this sentence is redundancy: "with which" is unnecessary. The infinitive phrase "to pay insurance" is enough to modify "funds" to bring across the writer's meaning. In the example, "We have weapons to fight the enemy," it also unnecessary to say "We have weapons with which to fight the enemy."

3. He is left to pondering what is to be done.

In this sentence, it is wrong to take the participle form of the verb "ponder," since the infinitive "to ponder" serves as an adverbial. Compare the sentence above with the following example: "I look forward to seeing you." In this case, it is a must to take the participle form of the verb "see," since "look forward to" is itself a set phrase, and what follows should be in noun form.

Native speaker: Penny Turner

1. A man surfs online instead of waiting in his car during the rush hour.

Like Professor Zhu said, nothing is wrong with the structure of this sentence. The reader gets the writer's gist, but there are loopholes in its rationale. I would fix the sentence simply by adding the key word "choose": A man chooses to surf online instead of waiting in his car during rush hour. The meaning then becomes clear: The man does not want to sit in rush-hour traffic, so he chooses to surf online instead.

2. Small enterprises have no funds with which to pay insurance.

I agree with the professor that the problem with this sentence is repetition. It retains the same meaning, and flows even better, without the phrase "with which." But know that not only Chinese speakers make this mistake; even native speakers sometimes weigh down their sentences with such words.

3. He is left to pondering what is to be done.

Yes, the problem with this sentence is the use of "pondering" instead of the verb's simple present tense "ponder." The corrected sentence should then read: "He is left to ponder what is to be done."

By Gan Tian

Most men chase after women younger than they are, but my friend Chen Xing is one of the exceptions: He is turning 24 this year and likes to date women who are over 30.

Chen recently had a 32-year-old girlfriend, but they broke up just before Spring Festival. At a party in a bar over the weekend, he was still upset about being dumped.

"I thought I finally met The One, but she refuses to talk to me anymore," Chen said.

"Really, Chen, I think you should try going out with women your age, like that one over there," Tim said, pointing at an attractive woman on the dance floor. "On second thought, I think I want her for myself," he said, striding towards her.

"Don't think about your ex anymore. Go and talk to some girls," I said. The next thing I knew, Chen was at another table, striking up a conversation with a sophisticated-looking foreign woman.

She was in a black halter dress, seated cross-legged. Her eyelashes were so thick you could barely see her eyes to guess her age. But the way she confidently carried herself, with a slim cigarette between her red-polished fingernails, she had to be at least 30 years old.

Chen talked to her for quite a while, then came back to our table looking crestfallen. "She said I can't be more than 24 years old at the outside," he said. "I told her I'm 24 both outside and inside, but she stopped talking to me!"

"You really are a dumb 24-year-old boy!" I said.

"At the outside' is an idiom which means 'at the largest amount' or 'the furthest limit.' The real amount may be less. It's like saying 'You can't be 24 years old at most,'" I said. "Go back to the classroom, boy. Now you see why these older women reject you?" I said, teasingly.

I then broke into a song, "Does Your Mother Know," that could have been tailor-made for Chen: "So you are blue but I can't take a chance on a kid like you ... I can read in your face that your feelings are driving you wild, but boy you are only a child. Well, I can dance with you honey, if you think it's funny. Does your mother know that you're out? And I can chat with you baby, flirt a little maybe. Does your mother know that you're out?"

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please take a picture and send it to gantian@ynet.com together with your name and address.



When washing bath, please notice water to warm up. Scald carefully!

By Tiffany Tan

This sign was created in the tradition of such signs as "Carefully fall to the river" and "Let your head knocked (here)." It aims to prevent harm, but ends up saying just the opposite – though still in a polite manner. It is very funny Chinglish, but

those who do not understand the warning will break out in curses, not laughter, when the hot water hits them.

What this bathroom sign actually means is, "When bathing, take note of the water's temperature. Be careful not to scald yourself."



Revolutionary Road

(2008)

Movie of the week

"No man could endure having a wife like April," one of my male colleagues said after watching this film. But it is indeed an incisive portrait of a marriage.

It poses a question that has long been discussed — can two people break away from the ordinary without breaking apart?

The film is adapted from the landmark novel by Richard Yates, *Revolutionary Road*. It received four Golden Globe Nominations at its 66th session and won Kate Winslet the Best Leading Actress award.

Synopsis

Ever since Frank (Leonardo DiCaprio) and April (Kate Winslet) met, they have seen themselves as special and different, and have longed for an idealistic life. Upon moving into their new home on Revolutionary Road, the couple pledges never to be confined by the social conventions of the era. As time passes, however, Frank and April gradually become the very thing that they feared most: a typical suburban family complete with abandoned dreams and faded hopes. They hatch a plan to head for Paris.

Scene 1: Highway Shoulder

(She leans against the car and folds her arms.)

Frank (F): You listen to me. This is one time you're not going to get away with twisting⁽¹⁾ everything I say.

April (A): Christ, I wish you'd stayed home tonight!

F: You know what you are when you're like this? You're sick. I really mean that. You're sick!

A: And you know what you are? (Eyes raking him) You're disgusting.

F: Oh, yeah?

A: Just because you've got me safely in this little trap, you think you can bully me into⁽²⁾ feeling whatever you want!

F: You in a trap! You in a trap! Jesus, don't make me laugh!

A: Yes, me. (Clutching at her chest) Me! Me! Me! Oh, you poor, pathetic little boy — Look at you! Look at you, and tell me how by any stretch of the imagination you can call yourself a man!

(He raises his fist, she flinches away⁽³⁾, and Bong! Bong! Bong! Bong! He punches the hood of the car. Then, silence. The look April gives him is probably the worst look he's ever received: a look of pitying boredom.)

F: Don't look at me like that, April.

A: Could we please go home now?



Scene 3: Wheeler Kitchen

(John stares at Frank for any sign of condescension.)

John (J): So, what do you do, Frank?

F: I work for Knox Business Machines.

J: You design the machines?

F: Nope.

J: Make 'em, sell 'em, repair 'em?

Mrs Givings (Mrs G): All these questions.

F: I sort of help sell them, I guess. I work in the office. Actually, it's sort of a stupid job. I mean there's nothing — you know, interesting about it or anything.

Mrs G: Oh, Frank ...

J: Whaddya do it for then?

Mr G: Maybe Frank doesn't want to be questioned like this, son.

J: OK, OK, OK — I know it's none of my business. And besides, I know the answer. You want to play house, you got to have a job. You want to play very nice house, very sweet house, then you got to have a job you don't like. Anyone comes along and asks "Whaddya do it for?" he's probably on a four-hour pass from the State funny farm. All agreed ...? Ma?

Scene 4: Long Island Sound Beach

(April wears a pair of dark glasses, behind which she is thinking.)

Shep (S): So, Frank, how's work? They gonna survive without you?

F: Actually ... Something kinda funny happened the other day. I did some dumb little piece of work to get myself off⁽⁶⁾ the hook with Bandy, and suddenly I'm The Bright Young Man.

S: (Laughs) That's always the way, isn't it?

F: It's incredible. I knocked this thing off⁽⁷⁾ in a couple of minutes and now they want me to join their team of "specialist" salesmen.

S: Morons.

F: It'd be funny, if they weren't talking about so much damn money.

(April turns and looks at Frank. Long and hard. If he can feel her look, he doesn't show it.)

S: (Atealing a glance at April) So, you tempted?

F: (Shrugs) Well, it's kind of ironic, don't you think?

Scene 2: Frank and April's Bedroom

(Frank steps out of the bathroom. April turns from the mirror wearing a silk negligee and comes towards him with two glasses.)

A: You want to know the worst part? Our whole existence here is based on this great premise that we're somehow very special and superior to the whole thing, and you know what I've realized ...? We're not! We're just like everyone else. Look at us! We've bought into the same ridiculous delusion⁽⁴⁾. This idea that you have to resign from life and settle down the moment you have chil-

dren. And we've been punishing each other for it.

F: Listen, we decided to move out here. No one ever forced me to take the job at Knox. I mean who ever said I was supposed to be a big deal, anyway?

A: When I first met you, there was nothing in the world you couldn't do or be.

F: I was a little wise guy with a big mouth, that's all.

A: You were not! How can you even say that?

F: All right ... So, I'll have time.

And God knows that's appealing. It's very appealing. And I mean, everything you say might make a certain amount of sense, if I had some definite talent maybe. If I were an artist or a writer.

A: But Frank, listen to me: It's what you are that's being stifled⁽⁵⁾ here. It's what you are that's being denied and denied and denied in this kind of life.

F: And what's that?

A: Don't you know ...? (He looks at her. She gazes back at him.) You're the most valuable and wonderful thing in the world ... You're a man.

Vocabulary

- 1. Twisting:** change the true or intended meaning
- 2. Bull someone into:** force someone to do something
- 3. Flinch away:** move back when shocked by pain, or in a fear of something unpleasant
- 4. Delusion:** a false belief
- 5. Stifled:** suffocated by or as if there is lack of oxygen
- 6. Get myself off:** escape
- 7. Knocked this thing off:** produce quickly or (too easily)

(By Li Jing)